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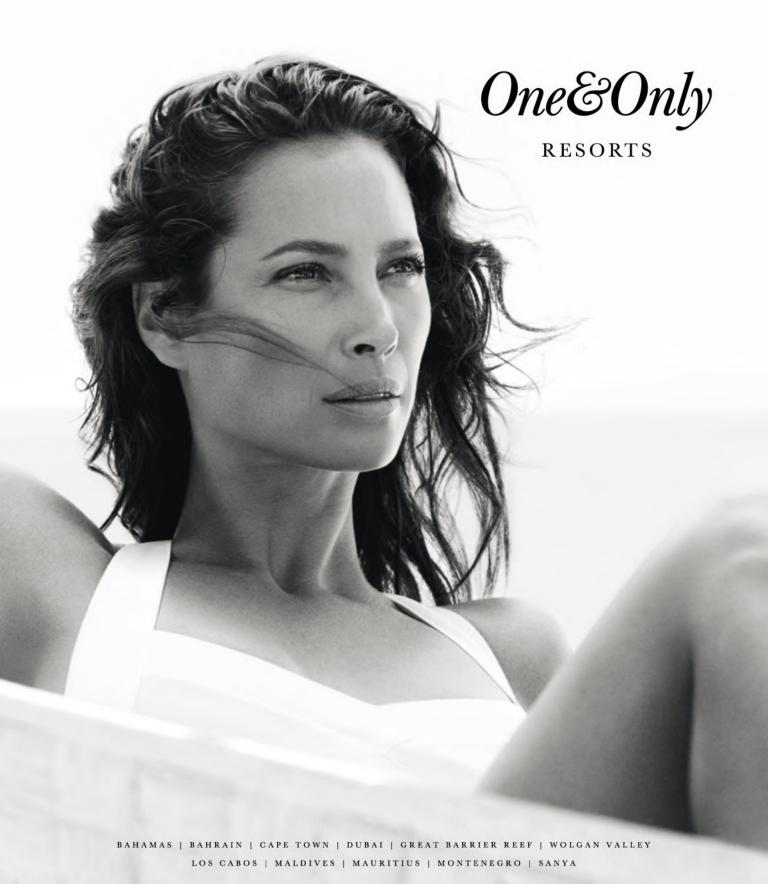
One&Only Reethi Rah continues 10 months of extraordinary celebrations through June 2016 to mark 10 years of welcoming guests from all over the world. In addition, new features are being added just in time for Christmas, including a new family pool and several more private pools, expanded retail, new dining experiences and so much more...

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features

- Pacific Heights The Hawaiian island of Oahu has long been a kind of mythic paradise, a lush and exotic mixture of America and Polynesia. But now, from the streets of Honolulu to the surf breaks of the North Shore, the currents are moving in a new direction, bringing in a fresh multicultural vibrancy and a bracing sense of style. By Maggie Shipstead. Photographs by Noe DeWitt
- 164 The New Old China A modern makeover is sweeping Chengdu—traditionally known for its laid-back way of life, its leafy, historic streetscapes, and, of course, its pandas. Christopher Beam visits this most appealing of Chinese cities, and meets the people working to connect its future to its past. Photographs by Simon Norfolk
- The Things They'll Carry This holiday season, give the travelers on your list gifts they can take around the world, whether to a ski chalet, a desert hideaway, or the perfect castaway beach. By Jane Bishop. Photographs by Joanna McClure. Styled by Jill Nicholls
- The Leading Edge Once considered industrial no-man's-lands, Amsterdam's outskirts have begun to hum with creative energy and, as Gisela Williams discovers, shift the center of the city itself. Photographs by Felix Odell



On the Cover Taking the plunge at Waimea Bay Beach Park, on Oahu's North Shore, page 156. Photograph by Noe DeWitt.

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The Guide

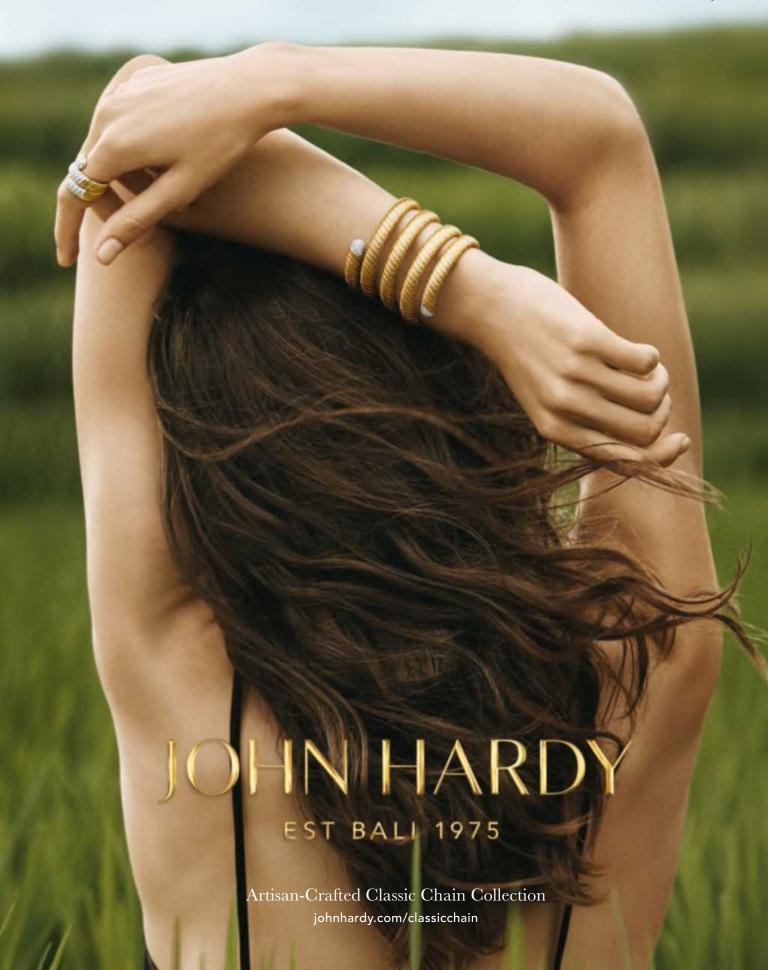
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Upgrade

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FOR FULL **DETAILS** ABOUT THIS MONTH'S DEALS, VISIT TANDL.ME/ DECDEALS2015 FIND OUT WHERE TO HAVE A COCKTAIL IN CUBA AT TANDL. ME/CUBANDRINKS



THIS MONTH ON TRAVELANDLEISURE.COM

NEW T+L JOURNEYS

This month, T+L Journeys—bookable vacations, tailor-made by our editors in partnership with Black Tomato—debuts three new trips based on stories from this issue: China, Florence, and southern Australia. To see the full day-by-day itineraries, go to tandl.me/journeys.

ELENA FERRANTE'S ITALY

From Milan's Basilica of Sant' Ambrogio to the University of Pisa, take a tour of the places that inspired the author's Neapolitan Novels series. tandl.me/neapolitanitaly

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDES

On the hunt for the perfect stocking stuffer? Our latest gift guides are a one-stop shop for all the travelers, adventurers, foodies, fashionistas, kids, and more on your list. tandl.me/giftguide2015

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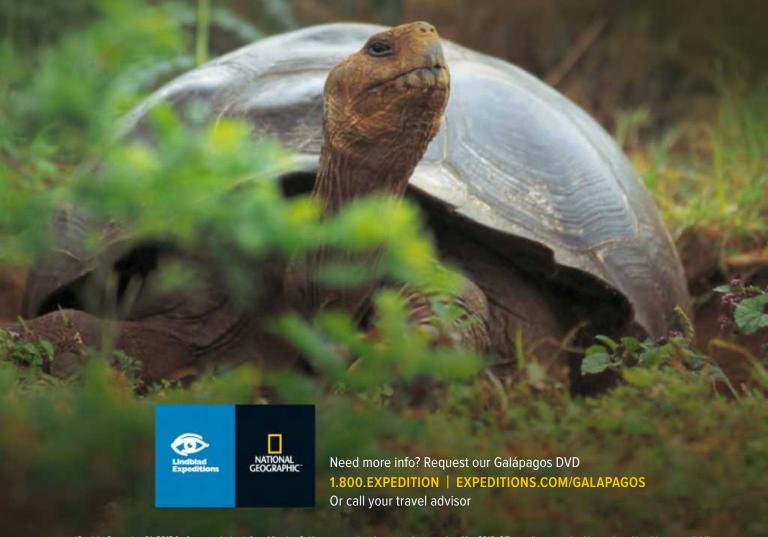
FROM LEFT: SIMON NORFOLK; ANDREA WYNER; CATHERINE BUI

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1

Joanna McClure

PHOTOGRAPHER
The Things They'll Carry
page 170

The still-life photographer, who has shot for brands including Tiffany & Co. and 3.1 Phillip Lim, creates images that are rooted in fine art but with a colorful and lighthearted edge. "I love objects with sculptural elements and to contrast high and low materials," she says. It's an approach seen in her work for this year's holiday gift guide. McClure's own wish list includes the Jil Sander tote bag and the Burberry backgammon set in the shoot ("for my dad," she says). What's next? "I'm headed to Mexico's Luis Barragán House and Studio for a Nine West campaign." Follow Joanna on Instagram:

2

Felix Odell

PHOTOGRAPHER

The Leading Edge
page 178

"Amsterdam feels like a young town, where young people set the trends," says Odell, who shot scenes around the city's burgeoning northern district, Amsterdam-Noord. His highlights included traveling by ferryboat to the lighthouse island of Vuurtoreneiland, as well as visiting Hotel de Goudfazant, a restaurant in a converted hangar, where the industrial details have been left intact. "There's new architecture, but the city is also taking care to preserve its old buildings," he says. On his next trip back, the Stockholm-based photographer says he'll revisit the Rijksmuseum and its Vermeer paintings. Follow Felix on Instagram: @felixodell.

Maggie Shipstead

@joannamcclure photo.

WRITER
Pacific Heights
page 156

"Some people think Honolulu is a tourist trap, but that just means they haven't left Waikiki," says Shipstead, whose recent visit took her, among other places, to the booming area of Chinatown. "I hope the neighborhood continues to blossom as a dining destination." The author of Astonish Me (Knopf) did a lot of eating and drinking on Oahu, including ordering a poke bowl (seafood salad over rice) from Island Vintage Coffee and mai tais at one of Waikiki's beach hotels. Her advice for island life? "Set your phone to aloha time or, better yet, turn it off." Follow Maggie on Twitter: @maggieshipstead.

Gisela Williams

T+L BERLIN CONTRIBUTOR
The Leading Edge
page 178

Since moving to Germany in 2003, Williams has had many chances to write about Amsterdam, and has witnessed its constant reinvention. "In the last five years, the food has become excellent, with passionate restaurateurs opening exciting spots in unexpected places," she says. "It strives to be one of Europe's creative capitals, and succeeds." On this trip, her most memorable moment was dining at the restaurant on Vuurtoreneiland, an island in the IJmeer, an hour from the city center. "To find myself on a wild, remote place so close to a major city felt magical." Follow Gisela on Instagram: @giselaatlarge.

Enough about us. Let's talk about you for a minute. There is the relaxed you

There is the relaxed you (hopefully we'll be seeing that you a little more often).

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IN DECEMBER WE AT TRAVEL+LEISURE ARE

about gift-giving—as well as the travel that so many of us will be doing around the holidays. Recently I've been exploring the difference between experiences and things. Psychologists have found in numerous studies that our satisfaction with the things we buy tends to decline over time, while the happiness we feel about good experiences we've had generally grows. Memories, in effect, only get better the more they recede into the past.

In this issue we provide all of our usual ideas for great destinations both near and far, as well as some stories specifically designed for those of you in gifting mode. Psychological studies aside, we can't help loving beautiful things, so "The



Things They'll Carry" (page 170) features style director Jane Bishop's selection of some truly covetable items that the travelers on your list will love, wherever they may roam. (Like I did, I expect you'll find some things for yourself in there, too.) On our website you'll find even more curated selections of great gear and gorgeous stuff for every type of traveler: just go to tandl. me/giftguide2015.

But given how valuable experiences are in the long term, we've devoted our Upgrade section (page 143) to the various ways you can give the gift of travel, from hotel gift cards and miles rewards to fully planned trips. And throughout the issue, we've offered several more ideas in the form of T+L Journeys, bookable itineraries inspired by this month's stories that have been created by our editors in conjunction with the bespoke outfitter Black Tomato. Find complete details on those and many other T+L Journeys at tandl.me/journeys.

As for me, this holiday season I'm off on the inaugural sailing through the Sevchelles of the Crystal Esprit from the brand-new Crystal Yacht Cruises. I can't think of a better way to cap off a year of incredible travel than by sampling a new offering I'm excited about in a place I've yet to visit. All of us at T+L sincerely hope that this holiday season you'll be making some lasting travel memories of your own.

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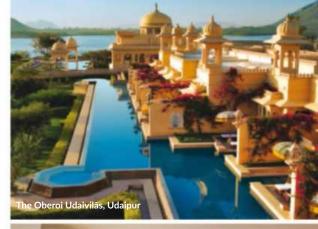
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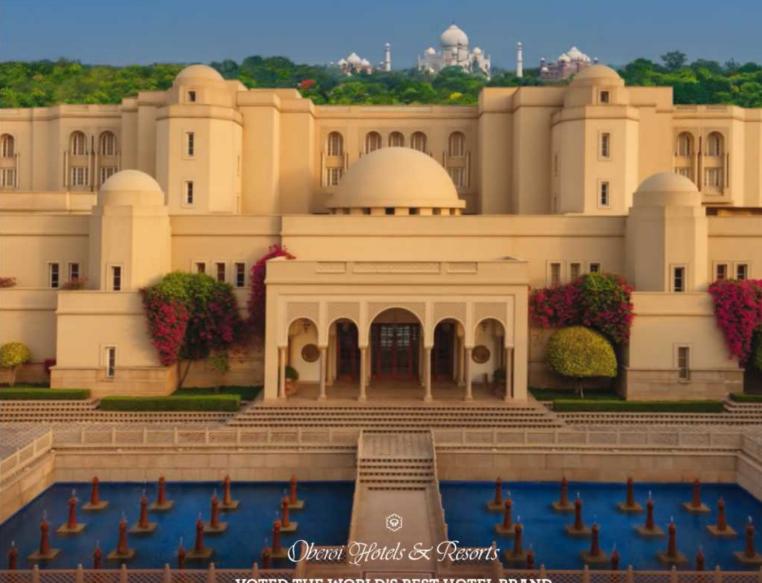
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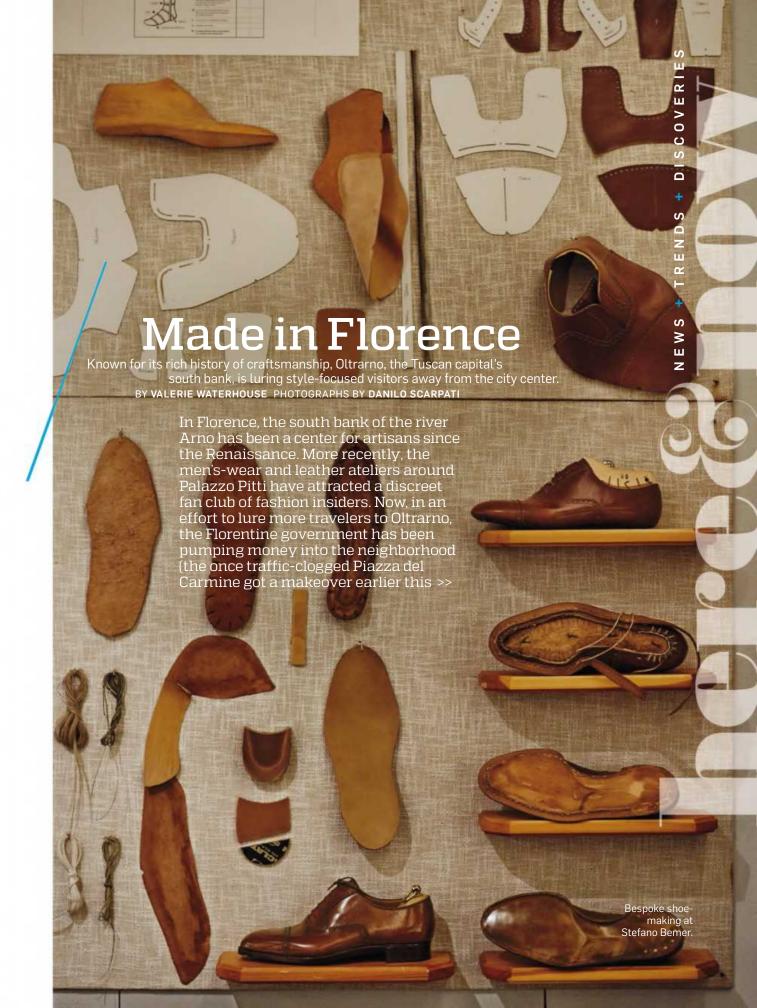
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CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: Designer Giulia Materia with her partner, Enzo, and their daughter, Anna; frescoed ceilings at SoprArno; leather craftsman Dimitri Villoresi



year). Boutique hotels have opened, along with innovative places to eat. Perhaps most notably of all, a new wave of artisans is modernizing and organizing Oltrarno's dynamic craft culture, making it more appealing to visitors than ever before.

Matteo Perduca, a lawyer and designer who is also one of the area's most prominent entrepreneurs, says, "What's really drawing people is the energy that's running through Oltrarno." With his partner, former Fortnum & Mason packaging designer Betty Soldi, Perduca runs AndCompany (andcompanyshop.com), a design studio and shop that sells ceramics and stationery adorned with calligraphy.

Just down the street, three craftswomen joined together to open Atelier Via Maggio (atelierviamaggio.it) earlier this year. The store stocks handmade table linens and home furnishings, many of them created in the on-site workshop. Close by, on a street opposite the Palazzo Pitti museum, designer Giulia Materia (giuliamateria. com) has her namesake boutique. (The location is appropriate, since the palazzo's construction, in the 15th century, lured other nobles to the area, thereby creating work for many more craftsmen.) The shelves of Materia's shop are lined with

covetable tote bags, artisan-made clothes, and notebooks covered in 1970s wallpaper. And on the hidden-away Via d'Ardiglione, Dimitri Villoresi (dimitrivilloresi.com) opened a leather workshop where he makes deconstructed, hand-stitched travel cases, bags, and other accessories.

To provide shoppers with suitably stylish digs, Perduca and Soldi last year debuted SoprArno (soprarnosuites.com; doubles from \$169), an 11-room guesthouse set in a 14th-century palazzo. Interiors combine original Florentine features—

frescoed ceilings and wooden rafters—with modern pieces like Arco lamps. And in November, they are scheduled to open their second guesthouse, Ad Astra (adastra firenze.com; doubles from \$225), in a palazzo belonging to the Marquis de Torrigiani. Most of the inn's nine rooms have views of Europe's largest privately owned city garden, which surrounds the property.

Several grassroots schemes to promote the area are also under way. Perduca and Soldi formed Unusual Florence (unusual florence.blogspot.com), a group of likeminded businesses that has produced a shopping map and website. In December, their Unusual Market will purvey holiday gifts at local hostel Ostello Tasso. Materia and her partner, Enzo Sarcinelli, have also founded Sulle Tracce di Arnold (sulletracce diarnold.it), a similar group of 22 Oltrarnobased shops and ateliers. Both websites are excellent starting points for a self-guided shopping tour of the area.

Perduca has his sights set on yet more projects in the neighborhood—opposite AndCompany is an empty shop he plans to convert into a café. "It's exciting," he says. "A new renaissance for Oltrarno."

More Oltrarno Artisans BOTH NEW AND CLASSIC

Stefano Bemer |

Handmade shoes in everything from hippo to 18th-century reindeer skin. stefanobemer.com.

Campucc10 | One-off art, jewelry, and leather goods designed by young artisans. *campucc10.com*.

Signorvino | A new store and tasting room whose mission is to bring Italian wines to a broader audience. *signorvino.com*.

Castorina | Wood-carving workshop from 1895 that still produces over 5,000 objects, including photo frames and adorable miniature animals. *castorina.net*.

Black Spring | An alternative bookstore founded by a gardener that sells unusual nature-themed publications. 10r Via di Camaldoli.

TAKE THE TRIP T+L JOURNEYS and bespoke outfitter Black Tomato present a weeklong Tuscan Dream Trip. Start in Florence, then tour the countryside for four glorious days. For the full itinerary, go to tandl.me/journeys-florence. To book with Black Tomato, call 844-284-0205.

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MARFA, TEXAS, with a population of 1,981 and one traffic light, has been an unexpected nexusof contemporary art for decades. Now it's added another rarefied pursuit: artisanal beauty and wellness products. Inspired by the high desert, these lines incorporate local ingredients into soaps, exfoliants, and moisturizers suited to life in West Texas and beyond.

El Cosmico | Liz Lambert's beloved hotel, where the rooms are trailers, yurts, tepees, and tents, is expanding into beauty. The ECPC Apothecary line, created with herbalist Erin Lee Smith, has (4) plant-based oils and balms to fight off dryness (from \$35; ecprovisionco.com). Lambert also worked with New York-based D.S. & Durga on a (1) fragrance. With notes of pepper tree, sumac, and mesquite, it's desert air in a bottle (dsanddurga.com; \$150).

Skin & Soul | Suzi Gruschkus, the best massage therapist in town, makes (2) sheabutter lotions inspired by the Chihuahuan desert that target tension and respiratory problems. Book a healing massage to try them at her holistic center, or buy the products directly. the wellmarfa.com; from \$24.

Marfa Medicinals | Ylana Frydman produces lip balms in scents like grapefruit-geranium and peppermint-orange. Her (3) desert salve, made with local creosote, plus plantain, calendula, and lavender, helps heal cuts, scars, dry lips, and cacti-induced wounds. marfamedicinals.com; from \$12.

Freda | This boutique stocks a number of Marfa-made products. Owner Susannah Lipsey recommends (5) Starling Brand's emu facial oil for its ability to soothe dry skin (\$65). For wilting hair, Jana La Brasca's line, Dr. J, makes a Landlocked Sea Spray (\$25) that provides beachy waves. And ANC Herbal Alchemy's High Desert tincture (\$25) combats mental fogginess brought on by high elevation. shop-freda.com.

Marfa Brand Soap | What started as a hobby in Ginger Griffice's kitchen is now a full range of bars, including Ranch Road, inspired by the cult fragrance Terre d'Hermès. She also uses ingredients like Lapsang souchong tea and yucca root. marfabrands.com; \$10. — MARISA MELTZER

FLIGHT PLAN

The slopes at Jackson Hole. Wyoming, will soon be some of the Rockies' most accessible. This month. American Airlines is adding seasonal routes from Chicago's O'Hare and Los Angeles, And Delta and United have added flights from New York's IFK and Newark, respectively. Stay at the Hotel Jackson (hotel jackson.com; doubles from \$275), smack in the middle of town. with a rooftop hot tub and 58 rooms with fireplaces. - NIKKI EKSTEIN

WORLDLY GOODS

FROM THE VAULT

When Canadian jewelry designer John Hardy first visited Bali, in 1975, he fell in love with its lush landscapes and craft traditions-so much so that he built an open-air workshop outside Ubud. Today, artisans still handcraft his renowned bracelets and cuffs there, and an on-site vault holds more than 10,000 pieces dating back to the brand's early days. Those archives informed this year's 40th anniversary collection, which includes leather-andsterling-silver bracelets and 18-karat-gold bands embedded with diamonds. johnhardy. com; from \$340.

- LINDSEY OLANDER

THE JOURNEY TO INDIA'S MANY WONDERS BEGINS AT THE CAPITAL

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/ hereEnow /

MASTER MAKERS

If Their Walls Could Talk

The duo behind Calico Wallpaper draws inspiration from around the globe for their traditional-meets-modern marbled designs. BY THESSALY LA FORCE PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS CALCOTT



AN UNFORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCE

can sometimes lead to an unexpected lucky break. When Hurricane Sandy hit New York in 2012, Rachel and Nick Cope, the creators of Calico Wallpaper, found themselves stranded without electricity in their home and studio in Red Hook, Brooklyn. While cooped up, Rachel, a 34-year-old sculptor and RISD graduate, began experimenting with marbling on paper. Nick, 33, soon realized their product was good enough for an upcoming design fair in

Manhattan. The couple slapped the paper onto a booth, placing an antique credenza they found upstate out front as a prop. Their calico cat, with her pretty patchwork coat, served as inspiration for the name. "We didn't even have pricing, we were just so focused on what it was," Rachel says. "People fell in love with the paper immediately," Nick adds. It's thanks to his background in digital photography that their one-of-a-kind marbled paper can be custom-sized and printed for any space-be it a repurposed Airstream decorated with contemporary art or the drawing room of the 150-year-old English house of antiques dealership Mallett at this year's London Design Festival. Since the launch, they have spent time in Tuscany apprenticing with Florentine marble masters, incorporated marbling techniques from Japan and Turkey, and added their own modern touches like gradients and moonscapes. Find their work at Future Perfect in Manhattan or at calicowallpaper.com.

MAYBE WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT THE 4000-POUND VOLCANIC ROCK IN THE ROOM.

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PUERTO RICO

With breathtaking natural beauty, world-class activities and cuisine, and friendly locals, island paradise Puerto Rico has all the elements of a perfect getaway. **The best part: It's a simple, direct flight from several** U.S. gateways — and you can leave your passport at home.

CULTURE + CHARM

Puerto Rico's lively mix of Tano, African. and Spanish influences is reflected in every aspect of the island, from its culture and cuisine to its art, music, and festivals. Get a feel for this rich history in the walled city of Old San Juan, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Stroll the famous blue cobblestone streets, visit Spanish-built forts (like Castillo de San Felipe del Morro), and pop into museums, galleries, and boutiques. For an unforgettable cultural experience, visit during a festival such as the Fiestas de la Calle San Sebastián, which marks the end of Christmas, or the star-studded Puerto Rico Heineken JazzFest in the spring.

ADVENTURES IN NATURE

Though only 100 miles long and 35 miles wide. Puerto Rico offers a wealth of distractions for nature and adventure lovers, including cave systems, salt flats, and 20 state forests. Can'tmiss experiences include zip lining along some of the tallest and longest tracks in the world, hiking in the tropical, waterfall-filled El Yunque National Forest, tubing down the Tanamá River, and kayaking at night through one of the



BEACH BEAUTIES

With 270 miles of coastline — golden sand on the Atlantic Ocean side, white along the Caribbean Sea — there are also plenty of places here to relax. snorkel, and swim. Flamenco Beach on Culebra Island often ranks among the world's top beaches, while the crystalline waters of Viegues Island are excellent for snorkeling. On the island's northwest coast, the surf draws top wave riders from around the globe. Head to Isabela, Aguadilla, Aguada, and Rincón for the most thrilling waves.



DRINK, DINE, DANCE

Puerto Rico's nighttime scene is full of good food and fun for families, friends, and couples alike. For a hip bar scene, try The Santurce or Calle Loiza. Old San Juan is the place for romantically lit dinners. Lively salsa beats go on all night at dance clubs and street festivals. Or you can try your luck at the island's hotel casinos. And don't forget the flavors: chefs both worldrenowned and up-and-coming work their magic using fresh local ingredients and seafood, so whether you hit a five-star eatery or a beachside food truck, you'll enjoy an unforgettable meal.





/ hereEnow /



UP IN THE AIR

Binge-watching can now continue at 35,000 feet. On Virgin America's new Airbus A320 aircraft, Netflix subscribers can access the site via Wi-Fi*. And Amazon Prime members can download content for offline viewing on any carrier.-N.E.

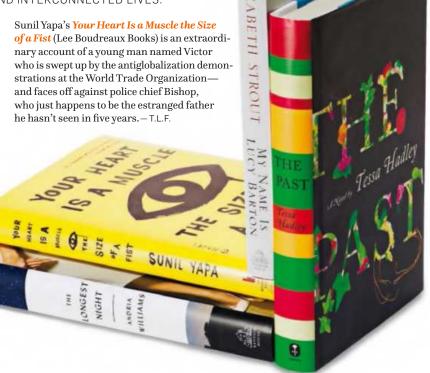
*Free until March 2016; routes include SFO to DCA and SFO to JFK.

ON THE SHELF

Family Drama

THE SEASON'S MOST ENGROSSING LONG-HAUL READS PROVIDE A LOOK INTO COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERCONNECTED LIVES.

THESE WINTER MONTHS are when relatives reunite for the holidays—sometimes happily, sometimes not. So it's fitting that some of the most interesting book releases offer compelling accounts of domestic tension simmering beneath the surface, waiting to spill over. In Tessa Hadley's beautiful novel The Past (Harper), four siblings arrive at their grandparents' shabby but still charming house in the English countryside—which may soon need to be sold. Steeped in childhood memories, the family discovers that its summer holiday has become a stage on which secrets are revealed and passions erupt. Elizabeth Strout, winner of the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in fiction for Olive Kitteridge, is back with My Name Is Lucy Barton (Random House), a touching novel about a mother and daughter who come together in a New York City hospital after far too much time apart. Andria Williams's debut, The Longest Night (Random House), set in Idaho Falls in the 1960s, tells of a marriage whose bond is tested

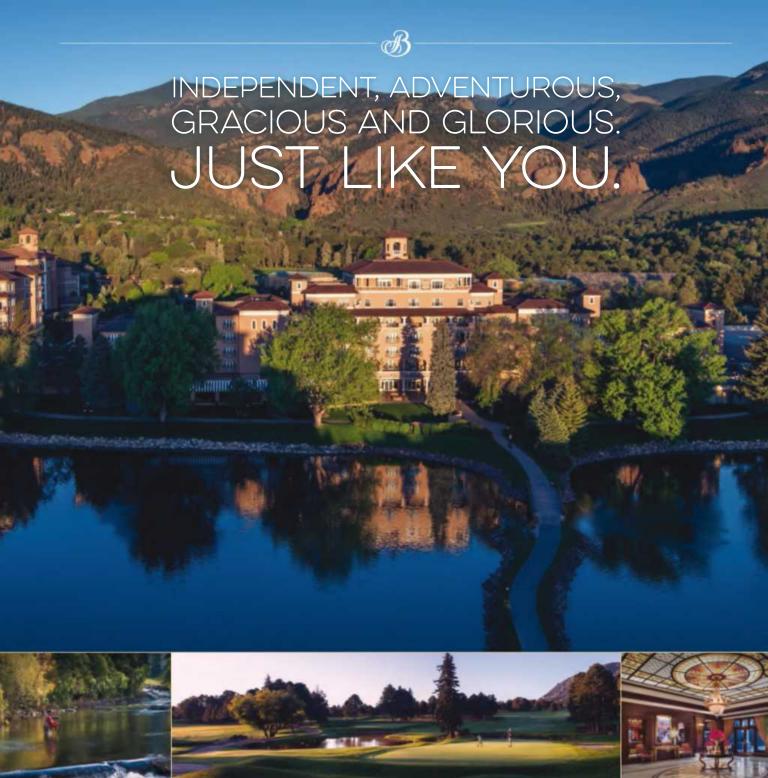


against the backdrop of a nuclear accident. And





1. Madeline Weinrib pillows, \$525 each. 2. Hermès "Voyage en Ikat" plates, large \$2,960, small \$630. 3. Dior Diorific Vernis nail polish in Gris-Or and Passion, \$28 each. 4. A look from the Altuzarra Resort 2016 Collection. 5. Forest of Chintz earrings, \$125. 6. Aerin Ikat Jasmine body cream, \$58. 7. Amarie clutch, \$188. 8. The lobby at HM Balanguera Beach Hotel, in Majorca, Spain. SEE BUYER'S GUIDE, PAGE 186.



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INDULGE

End your dinner with dessert made with Lindt EXCELLENCE. Try the warm Spiced Chocolate Tart featuring Lindt EXCELLENCE 70% Cocoa. Elegantly combined with cinnamon and coriander, this extraordinary flourless tart is the perfect finish for a winter night.



PAIR

Cap off the evening by indulging in chocolate and wine pairings. Perfect pairings - such as Lindt EXCELLENCE A Touch of Sea Salt and Pinot Noir - elevate the pleasurable tastes of both, intensifying the taste experience.











BREAKING GROUND

Safaris Without Borders

A crop of new lodges in Mozambique, the Kalahari Desert, and Ethiopia are opening up some of the continent's most remote corners and bringing in an unprecedented level of style.

IT'S A MERE 10-MINUTE helicopter ride, over coral-reef-strewn turquoise waters, from Vilankulo Airport to the pale-pinktinged sands of Mozambique's Benguerra Island. The star of this 21-square-mile marine national park is the new and Beyond property of the same name (andbeyond. com; from \$695 per person per night, all-inclusive). Each of the 13 suites and villas has its own infinity pool and beachside gazebo, with a low-key safari-lodge vibe that does away with kids' clubs and fussy dinners. Spend days on a catamaran cruise, horseback riding on the beach, or snorkeling at Two Mile Reef, where you can see tropical fish, turtles, and the endangered, manatee-like dugong. When the tide is low, whiz over for a picnic on Pansy Island, a sandbar covered in seashells.

Tswalu has long offered a different sort of far-flung escape in South Africa's untrammeled sliver of the Kalahari (tswalu. com; from \$926 per person per night, including meals and activities). It's owned by the Oppenheimer family, who made their fortune in the diamond business. The luxury camp sleeps only 18, meaning you get the private, 250,000-acre game reserve, with its red sand dunes and quartzite hills, practically all to yourself. Now, travelers can also stay at the Oppenheimers' former home, Tarkuni. Set away from the main property, it has five suites and its own spa, library, and full staff. On guided outings (in a 4 x 4 or on horseback), you'll see Kalahari lions, cheetahs, meerkat colonies, and (if you're lucky) the rare black rhino. It's a seven-hour drive from Johannesburg to this part of the desert, so book the family's Pilatus jet instead—it cuts the travel time to just 90 minutes.

In Ethiopia, the Limalimo Lodge, which opens early next year, will be the first upscale property to come to the slopes of Simien Mountains National Park, a unesco World Heritage site that could be called Africa's Grand Canyon (limalimolodge.com; doubles from \$300, including meals and activities). Gelada baboons and Ethiopian wolves roam the sheer peaks, wooded gullies

with waterfalls, and deep gorges. Guests who stay in the 12-room property pay a conservation fee that benefits the African Wildlife Foundation. Come for mountain hiking, biking, and camping out under the stars, along with visits to historic rural villages, yoga lessons, and traditional foot massages. - JANE BROUGHTON

> **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** Outdoor dining at Tswalu; sailing the Bazaruto Archipelago at Benguerra Island; one of Benguerra's villas; a gelada baboon, seen on safari at the new Limalimo Lodge.





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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Jonny Johansson THE ACNE STUDIOS COFOUNDER'S

THE ACNE STUDIOS COFOUNDER'S LOVE OF SURFING DICTATES BOTH HIS TRAVELS AND HIS DESIGNS.

On the Road

I don't travel light. I carry two Rimowa suitcases—one for clothing and one for shoes—because I like how they change and get dinged after each trip. And I listen to music to escape the fact that I am on a plane; flying is not my favorite thing to do.

Wave Rider

I learned to surf a few years ago. As soon as I tried it I was hooked. For our Spring/Summer 2016 men's collection, we worked with Robin Kegel, who makes amazing boards, on (4) jumpsuits that showcase his graphic designs of waves and circles.

Style Files

We have three Acne Archive stores, in Stockholm, Oslo, and (2) Copenhagen, with pieces from previous collections. We often get requests for older items, and this way we can still offer them to our customers. It's a bit like a treasure hunt.

Best Addresses

In Stockholm, where I'm based, I go to Bacchus Antik (bacchusantik.com) and Svenskt Tenn (svenskttenn.se) for furniture and graphic design. In London, I love Claridge's Fumoir bar (claridges.co.uk), with its burgundy-colored walls. And in New York, I go to (3) Saturdays (saturdays nyc.com) to check out the surfboards and have a coffee.



The lounge area of the Viceroy Snowmass's ski-

POWDER PLAY

This season's most noteworthy ski amenities, from Aspen to the Alps.

VICEROY SNOWMASS, ASPEN, COLORADO

The Perk The hotel spa now offers ski-in, ski-out treatments that refresh cramped feet and dry hands in a mere 30 minutes. viceroysnowmass. com; treatments from \$95. Ask For The hot-stone foot massage to relieve tension. If you're short on time, request lunch during the pampering.

CHEVAL BLANC COURCHEVEL, FRANCE

The Perk On one of the hotel's snowy terraces, a Mongolian yurt has become a cigar lounge, with cozy fur accents, leather armchairs, and drinks from the adjoining bar. courchevel.chevalblanc. com; cigars from \$40.

Ask For The new Voyou cocktail, made with brandy and bergamot.

WALDORF ASTORIA PARK CITY, UTAH

The Perk An Après Butler will prepare the fireplace, bar, and cheese board in your room. Removing your ski boots is necessary; drinking in your bathrobe is optional. parkcitywaldorf astoria.com; butler \$400.

Ask For A bubble bath, complete with a cozy robe and a pair of slippers.

— VALBONA TWERDAHL

in, ski-out spa



The Five Need-to-Know Runs

Peak-to-Creek may be the most famous run in Canada, a thigh-burning 6.8 miles from the top of Whistler to the valley floor. Do it in under 12 minutes and you're a mountain god; under eight and you could probably win the next mayoral election.

The double-black-diamond Spanky's Ladder is beloved by serious skiers. It has chutes to drop into,

then bowls to cruise down—but you'll have to click out of your skis and make a short hike to get to it. And be sure to name-check it as just "Spanky's."

The six-person chairs on the year-old Harmony Express deliver 3,600 skiers per hour up to terrain that the entire family can ski: Burnt Stew (green), Harmony Piste (blue), and Boomer Bowl (black).

Après-Ski Cheat Sheet

WHERE THE LOCAL TRIBES DO HAPPY HOUR—AND HOW TO JOIN THEM.



THE POSH OPTION

After the Four Seasons Resort & Residences' staff stores your skis, head to **Sidecut Modern Steak & Bar**. Onyx-paneled columns and a fireplace sheathed in a mosaic let you know this isn't a pitcher-of-beer-and-hot-wings joint. Settle in and order a glass of local Meritage. *fourseasons.com*.



ROWDY ROUNDTABLES

Noisy doesn't come close to describing the **Garibaldi Lift Co.**'s invariably packed room (referred to simply as the GLC). The big tables attract large groups of skiers trading exaggerated stories of hip-deep snow—often around a plate of poutine (fries with curds and gravy). whistlerblackcomb.com.



THE COOL CLUB

Opened five years ago, the **Ketel One Ice Room** at Bearfoot Bistro is now a carved-in-ice institution for high rollers—and the coldest vodka-tasting room in the world, at -25 degrees. Throw on a complimentary Canada Goose parka and toss back a shot or two for warmth. bearfootbistro.com.



DAY-TRIPPER'S DEN

Its location at the base of the Creekside Gondola—the first mountain access if you're driving from Vancouver—makes **Dusty's Bar & BBQ** the it-spot for brief visits. Choose a version of the Caesar, a.k.a. a Canadian Bloody Mary. On a sunny weekend, arrive by 2:30 for a patio seat. whistlerblackcomb.com.



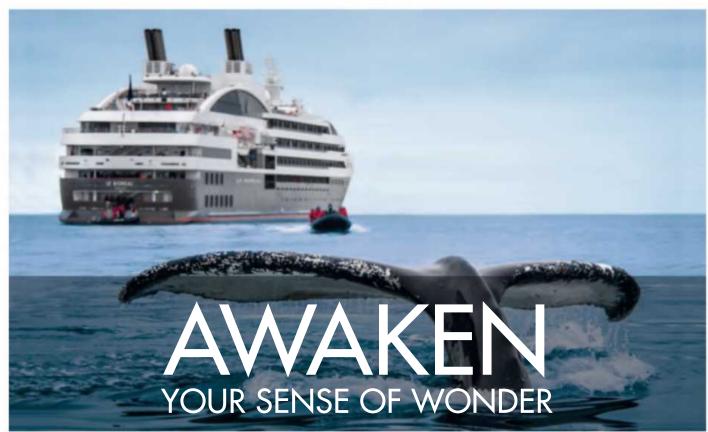
Art at Altitude

THE DEBUT OF A CONTEMPORARY MUSEUM IS A TIPPING POINT FOR WHISTLER'S CULTURAL SCENE.

It's true that ski-resort art galleries tend to run heavy on timberwolf canvases and tree-trunk carvings. But in early 2016, the Audain Art Museum, a temple to the art of British Columbia, will open in a 56,000-square-foot Modernist tree house designed by Vancouver's acclaimed Patkau Architects. Most of the gallery's 200-plus works—which range from 19th-century First Nations masks to contemporary works by Jeff Wall, whose conceptual photographs will form the inaugural exhibit—are part of the private collection of Vancouverbased developer Michael Audain, who wanted to create a monument to the province's artistic achievements. Just steps from the base of the Whistler Peak 2 Peak Gondola, it will also be a pleasant refuge on the rare bad snow day. audainartmuseum.com.

If First Nations art piques your interest, pay a visit to the nearby **Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre**. Housed in a soaring cedar-and-glass space, the institution beautifully tells the story of the area's founding people through its interactive exhibits. Its Thunderbird Café serves food inspired by native cuisine. *slcc.ca*.

The most noteworthy seasonal event is the Whistler Film Festival, held this year December 2–6. Though much smaller than, say, Sundance, it consistently punches above its weight in entry quality and celebrity attendance (Daniel Radcliffe and Kim Cattrall, for example). This winter, to mark its 15th anniversary, more than 80 films will be shown—including Ingrid Veninger's He Hated Pigeons, a narrative with an improvised live score that will accompany the screening. whistlerfilmfestival.com.









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O'AHU The Royal Hawaiian, a Luxury Collection Resort is steeped in intriguing island lore. Each Monday evening, the resort presents Waikīkī's only oceanfront dinner show, Aha Aina, which pays homage to ancient legends with storytelling, performances, and a modern take on a traditional feast. royal-hawaiian.com

KAUA'I Nestled on the tranquil shores of Po'ipū Beach, The Sheraton Kauai Resort provides daily cultural classes by the Ocean Pool. From introductory lessons in the Hawaiian language to surf lessons, hula classes, and tidal pool explorations, there's something new to learn every day. sheraton-kauai.com

MAUI At the foot of the Pu'u Keka'a (Black Rock) on Kā'anapali Beach, the breathtaking Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa holds a nightly Lele Kawa (cliff diving) ceremony. Honoring the legend of the last chief of Maui, a diver retraces footsteps in the sand along a torch-lit path, casts his torch and flower lei over the cliff, and dives into the sea. sheraton-maui.com

The 87,000-square-foot aquatic playground of **The Westin Maui Resort & Spa** provides the perfect botanical backdrop for practicing traditional crafts such as coconut husking or lei-making. The resort's weekly Aloha Craft Fair features island artists selling handcrafted jewelry, art, and souvenirs. *westinmaui.com*

HAWAI'I ISLAND At the 22-acre, oceanfront Sheraton Kona Resort & Spa at Keauhou Bay, the Land & Sea Tour provides guests with a profound understanding of the Keauhou region. The tour leads guests into the past to honor the Kaukulaelae heiau (shrine), before boarding a Hawaiian sailing canoe, the Kini Kini, from Keauhou Bay. sheratonkona.com

To book your next Hawaiian cultural getaway, go to starwoodhotelshawaii.com



THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN, A LUXURY COLLECTION RESORT, WAIKĪKĪ BEACH, O'AHU

Hawaiian getaway. Choose from our collection of 11 distinctive resorts on the islands of Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui and Hawai'i Island and book our Ocean Promotion Plus Package to enjoy daily breakfast for two











HAWAI'I ISLAND



















LEFT TO RIGHT: THE ST. REGIS PRINCEVILLE RESORT; MOANA SURFRIDER, A WESTIN RESORT & SPA; THE WESTIN MAUI RESORT & SPA; SHERATON KONA RESORT & SPA AT KEAUHOU BAY

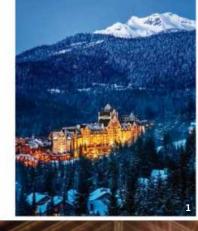
SKI BUTLER OR YOUR OWN KITCHEN? THE TRADE-OFFS ARE FEW IN WHISTLER'S MAIN AREAS.

When it comes to lodging, you'll want to be in either Whistler Village, where you can access the bases of Blackcomb and Whistler mountains, or Creekside, a smaller, quieter village five miles south.

WHISTLER VILLAGE

The Fairmont Chateau Whistler (1) has been the largest ski-in, ski-out property in North America since it arrived in 1989. Its grand façade channels the brand's iconic Chateau Lake Louise and Banff Springs properties, and speaks to a classic vision of Canadiana. The location is the best in town: right in front of the Four Seasons at the Blackcomb base-close enough to walk to the main village but far enough to escape the late-night weekend revelry. fairmont.com; doubles from \$253.

While Whistlerites proudly claim that this town ain't Aspen (no Louis Vuitton stores or mink coats), everyone was secretly proud when the Four Seasons Resort & Residences (2) opened in 2004. The 273-room hotel is within walking distance of the Blackcomb lifts, has what many consider the best ski concierge on the mountain, and offers rooms that are haute-rustic but not precious. fourseasons.com; doubles from \$254.







WHISTLER CREEKSIDE

To avoid the hubbub of Whistler Village, book at the 77-room Nita Lake Lodge (3), on a tranquil lakeshore 10-minutes' walk from the Creekside Gondola. The rooms are generously sized, and the services include in-house yoga classes and complimentary snowshoe loans. nitalakelodge.com; doubles from \$194.

can compare with extra space and a kitchen, which is why the swank condos at First Tracks Lodge (4) are in demand. The oneand two-bedroom suites are done up in a mountain mélange of rough-hewn logs and stone fireplaces, and can top 1,400 square feet. The Creekside Gondola is steps away. firsttrackslodge.com; doubles from \$348.

Top Tables

GREAT COOKING IN WHISTLER IS HAPPENING AT OLD STANDBYS AND RECENT ARRIVALS ALIKE.

Elegant dishes like elk tartare and foie gras parfait served with endive and cacao nibs, combined with a stunning mountain setting, have made Alta Bistro a standard-bearer of casual fine dining in just four vears, altabistro.com; entrées \$10-\$39.

Sticking around for 34 years—in a resort area, no less—is a remarkable feat. And the inventiveness that put Araxi Restaurant & Oyster Bar on the map is as strong as ever—it just added Dungeness crab rolled in egg crêpe with yuzu gel to the menu. araxi.com; entrées \$29-\$52.

The minimalist Basalt Wine & Salumeria, which opened this summer on the village's main stroll, is the spot for a plate of killer charcuterie and a bottle of B.C. wine. basaltwhistler.com; entrées \$22-\$36.

Bar Oso, the newest offering from the team behind Araxi, is a less formal (and less expensive) take on Spanish-influenced small plates that promises to be the toughest table to land this season. baroso.ca; tapas \$3.50-\$25.

GRABIT TO GO The town

is sometimes known as "Whistralia" because it hosts so many Australian workers, and they've left a culinary mark with liftfriendly hand pies—savory fillings in a closed pastry shell. Get an early-morning Ned Kelly (ground beef, bacon, egg, and cheddar) from Peaked Pies for the ride up the gondola (peakedpies.com).

Purebread may be the best bakery in the province. Go sweet (drunken-apple blondies) or go savory (pesto-pine-nut "stud muffin"). To avoid the line like the locals do, head to the Function Junction outpost, five miles south of the crowded village location. purebread.ca.

TIP Whistler Blackcomb is going smoke-free this yearso no puffing in lift lines, gondolas, or any of the restaurants owned by the company.



" Work with someone who isn't a CFP® pro? What do I look like, a lunatic? "





GERALD'S BAR | This outpost of a Melbourne-based bar serves Basque food from an El Bulli alum by day (get the rabbit terrine), and English chef Nick Hughes produces fantastic steak tartare by night. geraldsbar.eu; entrées \$7-\$22.

BODEGA DONOSTIARRA | At this oldschool spot, it's all about the classic pintxos (small bites). Order braised beef with tomato and satisfying tortilla de patata. bodegadonostiarra.com; pintxos from \$2.

BAR RICARDO | Mugaritz staffers go here for the city's best jamón croquettes, golden on the outside and molten within. 6 Calle General Artetxe; 34-94-327-0561;

BAR PAGADI | Around the corner from Bar Ricardo, this place combines traditional dishes (bold-flavored tripe omelettes) and refined favorites (perfectly crisp cod fritters). pagaditaberna.es; pintxos from \$2.

THE LOAF | The specialty at this beachfront bakery is a tangy sourdough; for something sweet, try the fresh-from-theoven caramel-banana bread. theloaf.es; snacks from \$2.- PAT NOURSE



TRUNK SHOW

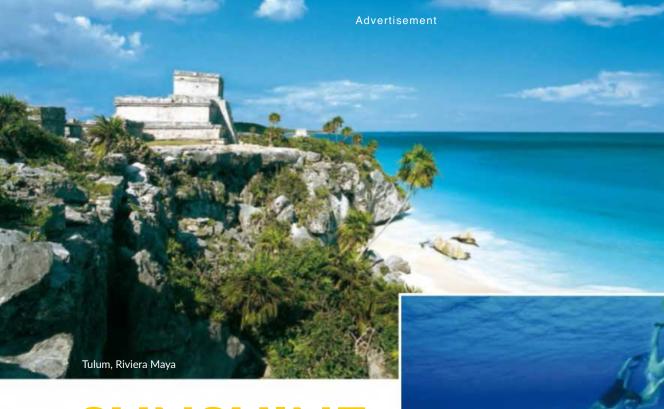
For the first time in 25 years, accessories company Ghurka has created a new line of hard-sided luggage. "The black, white, and yellow stripes are military flash colors that we fell in love with," says the brand's new designer, Kathy Formby. The collection is handmade in Italy using vegetable-tanned leather and nickel hardware, with pieces that range from an everyday briefcase to a head-turning wardrobe trunk. ghurka.com; from \$4,950. - s.w.

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SUNSHINE CALLING

With ancient ruins, powder-soft beaches, and legendary resorts, **Canc** and the **Riviera Maya** offer a taste of paradise on Mexico's lush eastern coast. Here an inside look at what to do and where to stay, plus highlights you just can miss.

Cancún and the Riviera Maya

Stretching along the shimmering Caribbean Sea, Mexico's Riviera Maya region has all the elements of a perfect getaway. Two cities anchor the area: laid-back Playa del Carmen boasts beautiful beaches, fine dining, and boutique shopping, while larger, lively Cancún — just a short drive north — is a tropical playground with water activities, golf, nightlife, locally inspired spas, and 14 miles of sandy coast.

From a base in either spot, you can travel back in time at Cancún's Maya Museum, or at significant nearby Mavan ruins like Cobá and Tulum. Re-connect with nature and yourself with a relaxing dip in a cenote (a natural, freshwater pool once reserved only for the Mayan gods), or with a day trip to a slow-paced island like Isla Mujeres or Holbox. If the kids are in tow, head to eco-park Xcaret, which offers dolphin encounters, or Xplor Cancún, where you can zipline, ride ATVs, and go cave swimming.

Elevated Stays

Just a short drive south from Cancún, the Riviera Maya is home to an array of noteworthy hotels, from amenity-filled all-inclusives to eco-chic boutique properties and five-star hideaways. With perks like world-class spas (often featuring Mayaninfluenced treatments). shimmering pools, gourmet restaurants, and pictureperfect locations on wide sandy beaches — plus the warm service Mexico is famous for — the hotels here rank high with all types of travelers, from families to honeymooners.

Once you've settled in, it's time to eat, of courseand the region excels in matters of the kitchen, too. Savor local specialties like caracoles (sea snails) served raw with fresh lime juice, or Mayan-inspired dishes made with homegrown ingredients like chocolate. corn, and chilies. Foodies should check out the annual Wine & Food Festival, or dine at one of the area's several AAA-Five-Diamond restaurants. including Fantino, The Club Grill, Le Basilic, Cocina de Autor, Passion by Martin Berasategui, and Le Chique.

TO PLAN YOUR CANCUN-RIVIERA MAYA GETAWAY, GO TO VISITMEXICO.COM.

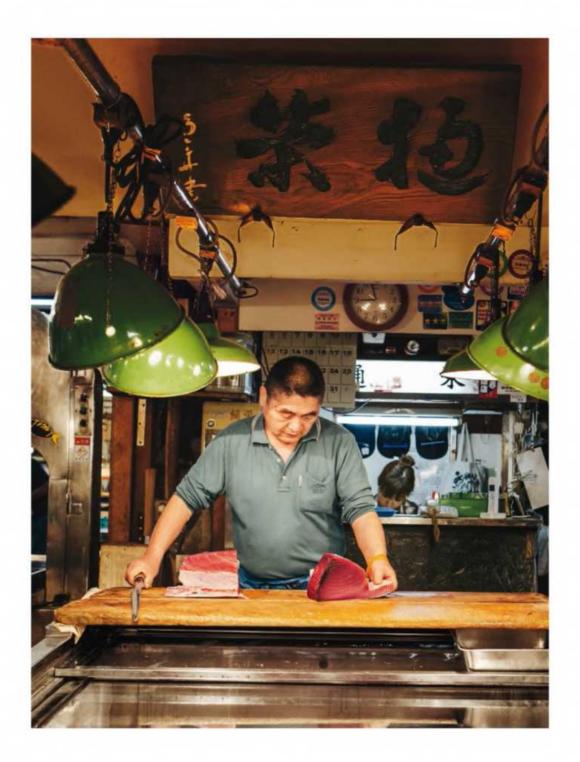
HOW CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE UNEXPLAINABLE?

LIKE GOING TO THE LOCAL MUSEUM 26FT UNDERWATER

Cancun Riviera Maya LIVE IT TO BELIEVE IT

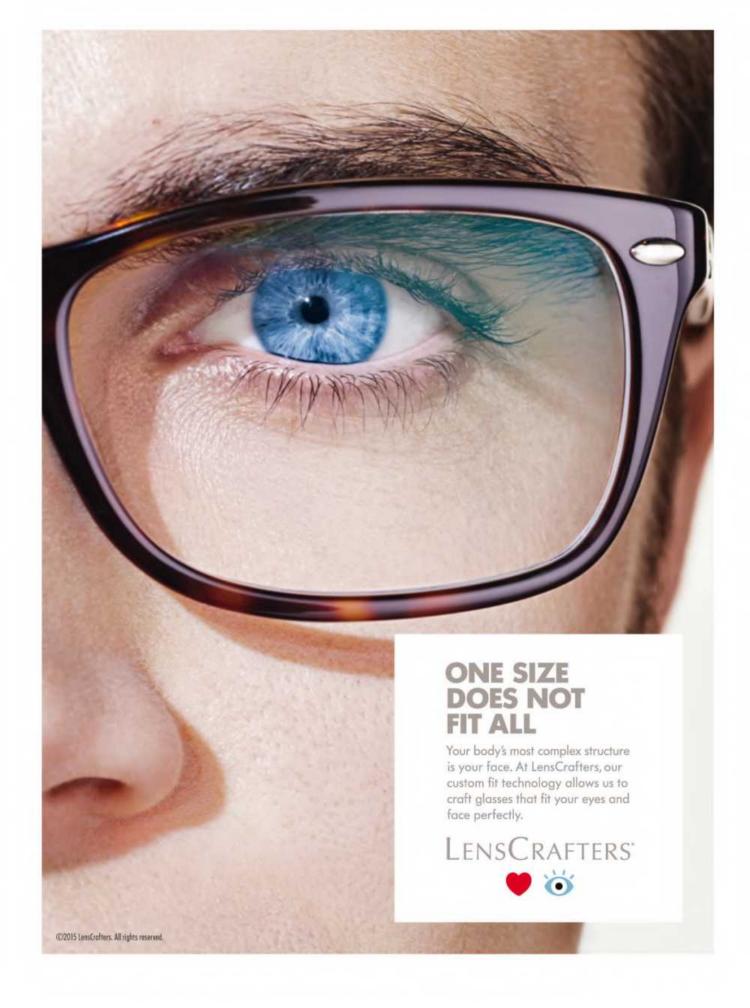


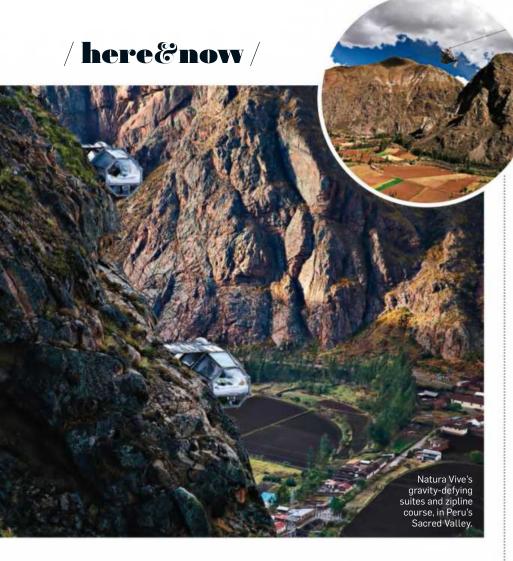
/ here&now/



THE MOMENT | TSUKIJI MARKET | TOKYO

For decades, crowds have descended on the world's largest fish market to see its predawn tuna auction, where restaurateurs vie noisily for the day's best catches. Outside, specialty vendors, like this fishmonger, sell uni and whale alongside sushi bentos and ramen. November 2016 marks the end of an era, as the inner wholesale market is slated to move to a larger, modern space a mile and a half away in preparation for the 2020 Summer Olympics. But for now, things are as they've been for 80 years. Merchants tend the weathered old work tables, counting the days until this historic fixture of Tokyo is just a fleeting memory. – L.O.





TRENDING

Reaching a Peak

ACTION-PACKED TRIPS ARE PUTTING THE SPOTLIGHT ON PERU-AND NOT ONLY ON THE TRAILS OF MACHU PICCHU.

OUTSIDE THE HISTORIC city of Cuzco, the Sacred Valley is drawing adrenaline junkies with a range of new thrills. Natura Vive, a climbing site known for its seven-part zipline, careers terrifyingly over mountain gaps. That's nothing compared with its new capsule suites: gravity-defying transparent bubbles constructed out of weatherresistant polycarbonate and high-strength aluminum. They cling to sheer rock faces 1,200 feet up, offering heart-pounding views of the valley. Each suite contains up to four beds and a dining platform, where staff serve breakfast every morning (naturavive.com; suites from \$281).

Ten miles from Cuzco, extreme-tour operator Action Valley has South America's highest bungee jump, at 400 feet. But true thrill-seekers-like Cameron Diaz, who showed up on a recent trip-go for the slingshot, in which you are fastened to the ground while a motor pulls the bungee

cord until it reaches maximum tension. Then a quick trigger release sends you screaming 405 feet into the air. At the apex, you'll achieve zero gravity not once but three times. Try to keep your eyes open through all the hyperventilating: the view of sprawling farmland and pine-covered hills is unforgettable (actionvalley.com; from \$71 per person).

Hikers who've already done the famous Inca Trail are trying the more immersive Salkantay Trek, which cuts a rugged path north of Cuzco and the Urubamba River and past waterfalls in Chaullay's dense cloud forest. Guides can plan a full itinerary, including climbing the Salkantay Pass (at 15,200 feet, it's one of the region's highest points), a visit to local hot springs, s'mores roasting in the jungle, and of course, the sunrise ascent to Machu Picchu (salkantaytrekking.com; from \$400 per person). - ALEX SCHECHTER

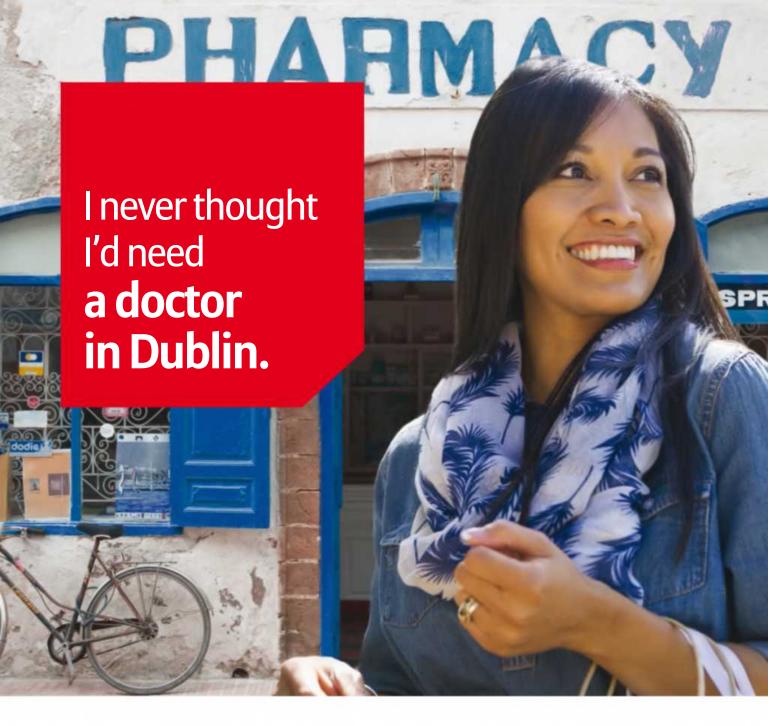
TOOL KIT

HIKES, CAMERA, ACTION

Document your next adventure with these readyfor-anything gadgets.

- 1. TomTom Bandit Action Camera Postproduction is a breeze with the Bandit, which pinpoints exciting moments based on factors like your heart rate and acceleration, and then lets you edit them with a foolproof app. tomtom.com; \$400.
- 2. Polaroid Cube+ Stylish and affordable, the tiny Cube+ packs in both HD-quality video and Wi-Fi connectivity, so you can seamlessly transfer content to your phone for instant sharing. polaroid.com; \$149.
- 3. Garmin VIRB XE The VIRB uses Garmin's GPS technology to record speed, acceleration, and vertical drop-so that you can show off your stats alongside footage of your first tracks. garmin.com; \$400.
- 4. Sony X1000V 4K Action Cam When barreling down the slopes, this devicewhich shoots in 4K, the best resolution out there—stabilizes your shots and reduces ambient sounds like rushing wind. It's also waterproof and submersible up to 34 feet with a case. store.sony.com; \$500.
- 5. GoPro Hero4 Session The latest from the action-cam pioneer is half the size of its forebears, with one-button controls and a dual mic system for better sound quality. A new app for the Apple Watch puts a remote viewfinder right on your wrist. shop.gopro.com; \$300.-N.E.





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SLOPES

A Day in the Life of a Ski Enthusiast

By the time he was 10, Graham Sparks was as familiar with ski boots as he was with any other pair of shoes. But it was in the year or two following his 10th birthday that his passion for the sport really began to grow. He explains, "Oddly, it was a movie about skiing that first made me want to become a professional skier. I had always skied, but after seeing that movie, I really started to eat, sleep, and breathe skiing. It became an obsession."

Fifteen years later, Graham is not only a successful competitive skier, he's also the proud owner and founder of Grizzly Boards, a ski construction shop in Aspen, CO. "I started to build skis because I love to ski and I love to create. Combining those two passions was the most sensible thing

for me to do," says

Graham.

Asked about his love for the sport, Graham says, "When I think about my passion for skiing, I imagine myself skiing in the trees during a storm. Storm skiing through the woods is so peaceful, it's my favorite type of skiing." It goes without saying, though, that storms are not always so tranquil. "You have to be careful out there," says Graham. "Preparation and knowledge are everything."

Whether skiing at a resort or in the back-country, Graham insists that the proper gear is essential. "I choose to wear GORE-TEX® outerwear because it's windproof and waterproof, yet also breathable. When you're skiing, it's easy for your body to go from freezing cold to a full sweat. GORE-TEX® fabric's ability to breathe keeps wind and water out on your way up, and keeps perspiration to a minimum on the way down."

What's the most important thing to remember on the slopes? According to Graham: "Have fun!"



This waterproof, windproof, and breathable GORE-TEX" jacket features a zip-out powder skirt and a helmet-compatible gale force hood with a laminated wire brim that keeps the rain and snow off your face.

5 2 4 5 5 E



GRAHAM'S TOP TIPS FOR SKIING IN DEEP POWDER

- 1. Maintain a low, wide balanced position, keeping your center of gravity over both skis.
- 2. Keep your chin up and look forward. This will keep you from leaning too far forwards.
- 3. When turning, make a long radius turn and do not pole plant. Avoid changing direction too quickly in order to maintain your speed.

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/ hereEnow/

T+L DEALS

Market Values

One of the greatest things about traveling in December is hitting the holiday bazaars. This month's deals sample the best of them, whether on a cruise or at a new city hotel.





SUPER SAVER

The Carlyle Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C.

This Art Deco-inspired newcomer will help you maximize your time at the Downtown Holiday Market, featuring more than 160 artisans, by providing cab fare and a gift certificate to kick off the fun. The Deal Two nights in a Deluxe room, \$312 for two, through January 31. Save 37%. carlylehoteldc.com.

EUROPE

AVALON WATERWAYS

The cities on this Danube cruise, from Prague to Vienna, are magical when draped in snow; take in the view with seasonal treats, like mulled wine and gingerbread biscuits. The Deal Two nights in Prague and six nights aboard the Impression, from \$1,659 per person, double; book by January 31. Save 30%. avalonwaterways.com.

BELGIUM

CROISIEUROPE

Belgium has some of Europe's finest markets, with skating rinks, illuminated chalets, and handmade crafts. This itinerary visits three of them in four days. The Deal Three nights aboard the Modigliani, \$465 per person, double; valid for December sailings. Save 30%, croisieurope rivercruises.com.

VIENNA

GRAND FERDINAND

The Austrian capital's latest opening has a rooftop overlooking the Ringstrasse and friendly staff who'll warm you up with goulash and champagne after a day of outdoor holiday shopping. The Deal Three nights in a standard room, \$690 for two, December 1-January 31. Save 32%. grandferdinand.com.

CHICAGO

HOTEL LINCOLN

This retro Lincoln Park property will arrange a day of ice skating, picking out stocking stuffers at the Magnificent Mile Lights Festival, and more. The Deal Two nights in a junior suite, \$338 for two; book by January 31. Save 30%. hotellincolnchicago.com.

DENVER

ART HOTEL

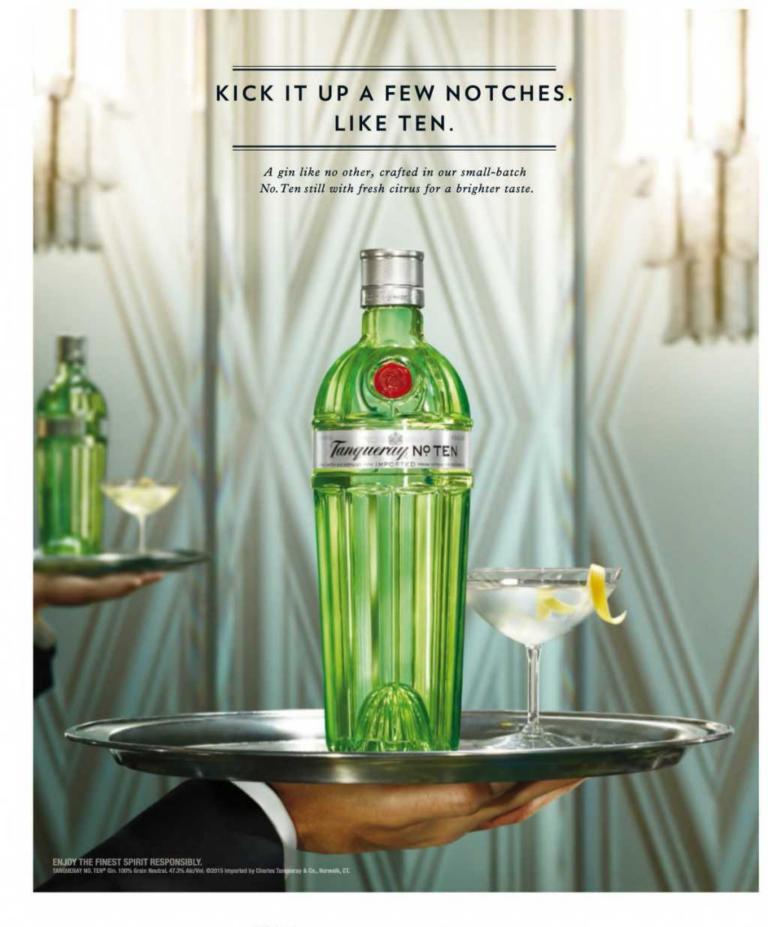
Navigate the enormous Christkindl Market with a guide from this recent downtown debut, whose rooms have works selected by a former Denver Art Musem curator. Gift wrapping and shipping (by elves, of course) is on the house. The Deal Two nights in a suite, \$600 for two, through January 31. Save 34%. thearthotel.com.

- LISA CHENG









Tanqueray Nº TEN'



beyond / urban study



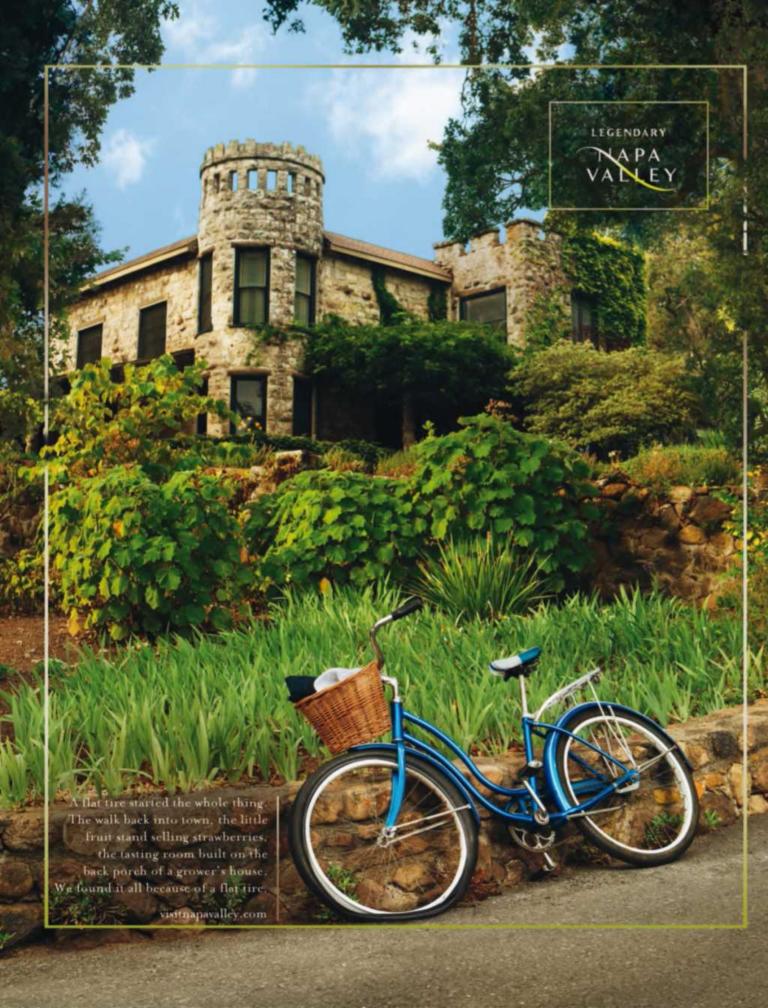
CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: Products at Sincerely, Tommy; owner Kai AventdeLeon; the pizza restaurant Saraghina, one of the first of Bed-Stuy's next-gen businesses.



If you know anything about Bed-Stuy, it's probably through rough-and-tumble depictions in Spike Lee's Do the Right Thing and the songs of Biggie Smalls. The tide of change that has brought rustic, artisanal-everything restaurants and perfectly curated curio shops to so much of the borough has now reached this neighborhood, however, along with Crown Heights to the south. This was



probably inevitable, though for anyone who remembers the crime and riots that took place here a generation ago, it's an astonishing transformation. But given the durable sense of community in these historically black enclaves—along with beautiful brownstone-lined blocks that reveal the area's prosperous origins—it's no surprise that this part of Brooklyn would attract newcomers. The version of Brooklyn cool that has arrived here feels more graceful and grown-up than the scruffy, hipster domains of Williamsburg and Bushwick to the north, and quieter and more intimate >>





THE SETTING

Set against the dramatic backdrop of the Colorado's famed red rock canyons, Gateway Canyons Resort & Spa is the ideal locale for groups to venture out into the wilderness and shake things up. Guests can choose from 72 suites, including 14 private casitas that boast fire pits and adobe-inspired architecture. But it's not just the luxurious accommodations that will unite the team; it's the wide array of outdoor adventures, team-building activities, and unforgettable escapades. The expert event staff will help plan everything from monumental family reunions to game-changing corporate getaways and incentive trips that ignite the team. Whether it's horseback riding, trail hikes, laser tag, geocaching, donkey races, rock climbing, kayaking, or the immersive Evolution of the Weapon experience, the resort's stunning surrounding landscape allows for endless group exploits. There's no better place to strengthen your team, foster creative collaboration, build lasting connections, start smart conversations, or incentivize a group.

THE SPARK

With more than 12,000 square feet of state-of-the-art meeting space, Gateway Canyons cultivates a welcoming atmosphere for collaboration and creativity. The on-site LEED-certified Palisade Event Center offers both intimate boardrooms and spacious outdoor patios, while the Kayenta Conference Center provides over 3,200 square feet of meeting spaces replete with natural light, wireless Internet, and covered outdoor spaces. Lectures can be held in the Mission Bell Amphitheater with its large stage and ample seating, while receptions can take place in the shaded lawn of the Cottonwood Terrace. Host a wine tasting at The Ponds, a cocktail party at the Paradox Grille Courtyard, an authentic outdoor gathering at the Red Cliff Camp, or a meet-and greet at the Gateway Auto Museum. It doesn't matter if it's a product launch, a sales meeting, or a gathering designed to rally and reignite the marketing troops—the multiple meeting spaces and unique event locations make Gateway Canyons the ideal place to both inspire and get inspired.







ADVENTURE AWAITS IN THE LAND OF AWE

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than bustling Fort Greene and Boerum Hill to the west. Sincerely, Tommy wouldn't be out of place in European districts like Paris's 11th Arrondissement, London's Shoreditch, or Copenhagen's Nørrebro, where small, point-of-view-driven boutiques thrive on sleepy streets that seem more like private discoveries than public thoroughfares.

Avent-deLeon decided last year that the time was right to open Sincerely, Tommy, four blocks from her childhood home. In addition to selling clothing, ceramics, and jewelry, the store serves espressos from a marble-topped bar in front. As we walked to a public-school playground where the shoot would continue on the same blacktop as a pickup basketball game and a Sunday barbecue, Avent-deLeon explained what drew her back to Bed-Stuy after a stint working in Manhattan for Chanel. "Small businesses have always played a big role here," she said. She mentioned a few examples, like Saraghina, the six-year-old craft-pizza spot owned by former fashion designer Edoardo Mantelli, and Lovers Rock, a recently opened reggae bar. "I appreciate being able to keep discovering my own neighborhood," she added.

A few blocks away is an ambitious 26-seat restaurant called Willow, a sliver of a place nestled in a gut-renovated former tax office steps away from the end of the elevated S line at Franklin and Fulton, across the street from a Dunkin' Donuts and a Popeyes. It was opened last April by John Poiarkoff, the 32-year-old chef behind the Pines, a popular New American spot across the borough in Gowanus. At Willow, Poiarkoff cooks with beef aged for 75 days and vegetables grown upstate expressly for his recipes. Because this is still Brooklyn, the menu features a rotating dish of snacks he calls "pickled things." When I ate there, it also included fava beans tossed in a house-cured-lamb-belly XO sauce >>



CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW: Hake with shishito peppers and lobster at Willow, in Bedford-Stuyvesant; Hullabaloo, a bookstore in Crown Heights; the dining







SOMETHING

SPICYTO EXCITE :



BOLD TO SATISFY











The intersection of Franklin Avenue and **Fulton Street** in Bedford-Stuyvesant, at the northern terminus of the elevated S line.

spread on toast and hake brined for three hours then slow-poached in butter. Though Willow's food doesn't reference the neighborhood's historyothers, like the excellent neo-soul restaurant Peaches, do-Poiarkoff seems to relish his incongruous location. "There's doughnuts, fried chicken, and us," he said.

The sharp blue cheese that accompanies Poiarkoff's expertly charred skirt steak matures a few blocks to the other side of Atlantic Avenue in Crown Heights, in one of the former lagering tunnels of a long-defunct 19th-century brewery. Crown Finish Caves uses these passages to age cheeses from within 250 miles of New York City, which it distributes to restaurants and specialty stores like Covenhoven, a nearby taproom and beer garden, and Saraghina's spin-off, Saraghina Bakery.

These neighborhoods owe much of their appeal to their large historic districts, which contain many handsomely preserved 19th-century brownstones

and mansions reflecting a broad range of architectural styles. Unlike, say, Williamsburg, with its ungainly mishmash of recent residential and commercial developments, this is an exceptionally pleasant place to go for a walk.

I did just that one Saturday, beginning at Berg'n, a former garage in Crown Heights that is now an airy hall with Annabelle Selldorf picnic tables, a wide selection of beers and wines, and a row of food stalls. My favorite of these was Samesa, from chefs Max and Eli Sussman, which serves excellent shawarma (and pickles, of course). Berg'n is the brainchild of Jonathan Butler and Eric Demby, whose previous ventures, Brooklyn Flea and Smorgasburg, brought buzz, ramen burgers, and curated commerce to other parts of the borough when they were just burgeoning, too. When the duo saw an opportunity to bring the kind of Brooklynbranded amenity they themselves invented to Crown Heights, they seized it. "We wanted to >>



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CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: The Emmy burger, a specialty at Emily, in Clinton Hill: Emily chef Matthew Hyland preps a pie; a walkway on Eastern Parkway, in Crown Heights.

create an anchor for the neighborhood," Demby said. "There's a great future here."

After passing beneath the S train, I headed south, down Franklin Avenue, checking out neighborhood standbys like Little Zelda, for coffee, and Mayfield, for the raw bar. Over on Classon, the customers in line at Park Delicatessen to purchase fresh floral arrangements studied the skateboard gear and colorful Comme des Garçons wallets also for sale. On Eastern Parkway, I wandered along one of the two beautiful, mellow medians, planted with 1,100 trees of 25 species. The landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed these 30-foot-wide strips in 1866 while they were also developing nearby Prospect Park and expanding Central Park. A century and a half later, I found families sitting on the benches, playing board games and laughing. An elderly woman sold bright-vellow Jamaican Scotch bonnet peppers from a cart. So much of New York encourages you to keep moving. Eastern Parkway asks you to stay.

As the afternoon faded, I headed toward cozy, collegiate Clinton Hill, just west of Bed-Stuy. The dinner line was forming at Emily, which specializes in inventive pizzas. Chef Matthew Hyland turned pies in the wood-burning oven while his wife, Emily, a yoga instructor and poet, greeted guests. Hyland also recently introduced the Emmy burger, to great fanfare. It's dry-aged, veiled in cheddar, and glazed with Korean-inspired barbecue sauce. Only 25 are served per night. Trying to choose between the burger and pizza is pointless—the only move is to get both. But it was too much food, so after paying the check I wandered the tranquil streets with half a Sophier pie (mozzarella, mustard, sauce, and herbs), gazing at the brownstones bathed in moonlight. I walked until not a single slice remained. •

THE DETAILS Restaurants and other attractions, page 184



ABOVE ABYSS, BLUE BELOW, POINT REYES, CALIFORNIA

by David Benjamin Sherry

The photographer on his image of the Pacific taken at the Point Reyes Lighthouse: "I use an 8x10 camera, which is big and heavy, but the quality is incredible. Many great American landscape photographers—Ansel Adams, Minor White, Edward Weston—used one. I always wondered why I'd never seen an 8x10 picture of this view. When I got out of the car, I said, 'Oh, this is why.' The wind was the strongest I've ever felt. I went without my camera, which was really hard because it was so epically beautiful. But the next day at sunset, the air was dead still, so I lugged it up there. The photo gods were with me." Sherry's exhibition is on view at Moran Bondaroff in Los Angeles through December 12.



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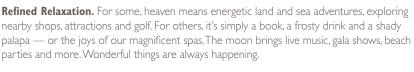




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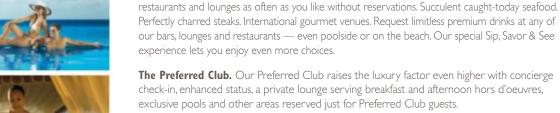
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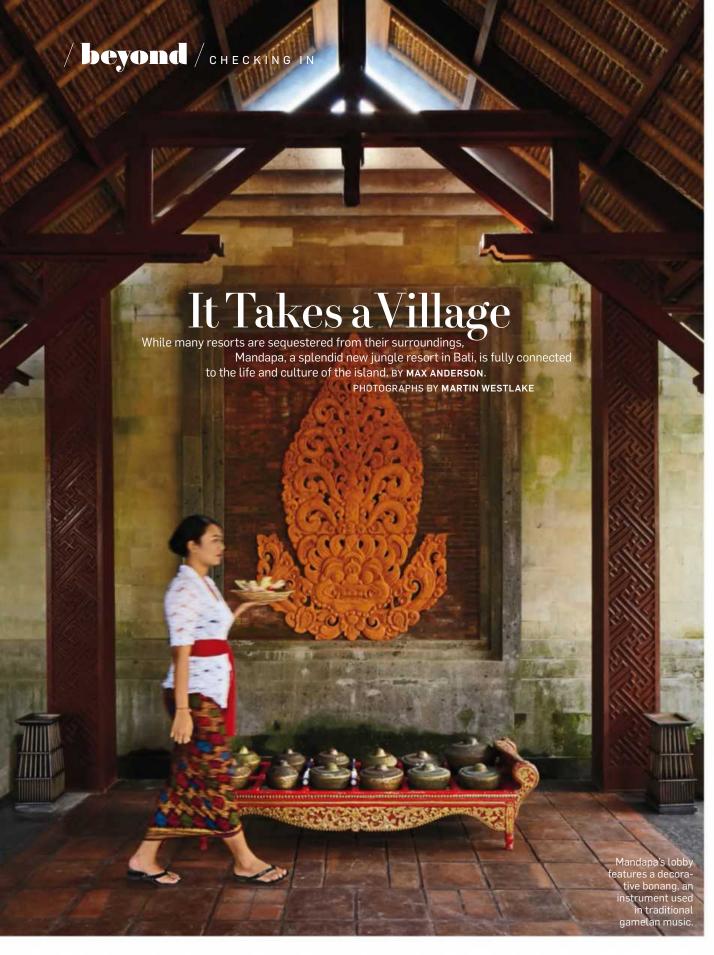
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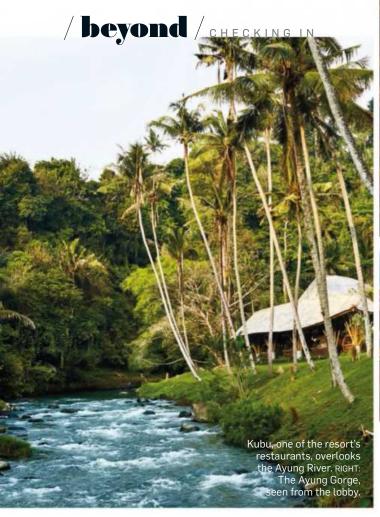
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LUXURY RESORTS are like theater companies, stagemanaging the untidy business of life to create moments of magic. The road to the hill town of Ubud is typically Balinese, a thoroughfare of color and chaos full of chickens, kids flying kites, and stalls selling fuel. But you leave it all behind when you turn down a quiet lane and reach the stone entrance of Mandapa, the newest Ritz-Carlton Reserve. Like a scrim, it gives away nothing of what's to come.

After walking through the entrance, I found myself on a platform with daybeds and onyx pools, perched on the rim of a plunging valley. I had to look past my shoes to see the rest of the property, an array of gracious buildings and gardens, descending 325 feet to the Ayung River.

"It's like the Lost Valley of Luxe," I exclaimed.

"We think of it more as a village," replied the general manager, Ana Henriques. Mandapa has only 60 rooms, she explained—35 suites nestled into the hillside and 25 pool villas down in the valley. "In between are the rice terraces and the temple," she added. "Just like a Balinese village."

I admit, this sounded like one of those ersatz creations designed to give guests a feeling of cultural connection. But, as I was to learn, the philosophy went deeper than that.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

On September 5, Mandapa opened in Ubud, the cultural capital of Bali. Ten miles inland, the town is a safe distance



from the infamous resort strips of Kuta Beach and Nusa Dua, but it's no longer the remote paradise that captivated bohemian European artists and writers in the 1930s. And it's certainly no stranger to high-end tourism—at least six resorts in Ubud call themselves "five-star."

The beauty of the region, however, is undiminished. Jungle grows thickly on fertile volcanic soils, artists' communities still flourish, and the emerald rice terraces clinging to the steep hillsides are still one of the world's must-see land-scapes. The heart of Mandapa is its three acres of rice fields and adjacent century-old Hindu temple.

This is all that remains of the 24 acres previously farmed by a neighboring village of 30 families. Several years ago, a group of Jakarta-based investors bought the land to develop a resort. Villagers insisted that any development would employ people from their families, and that they would continue to own the temple. The investors forged a partnership with Marriott International, which felt the village stipulations could work well within the precepts of its new brand, Ritz-Carlton Reserve, a portfolio of small resorts (none has more than 100 rooms) designed to fit in seamlessly with local culture and landscapes.

"The villagers have complete access to the temple, which has been with them for three generations," Henriques said. "Every day, they come to make their offerings. We also invite them to help with the rice harvest."

The rice terraces—which include a traditional barn on stilts—are usually being worked by one or two villagers who are now employed by Ritz-Carlton. It raised a question, which I put to Jack Widagdo, the resort's head of sales: "If they've sold their lands to a resort developer...."

"Why are they not retired on a beach in Jamaica, right?"



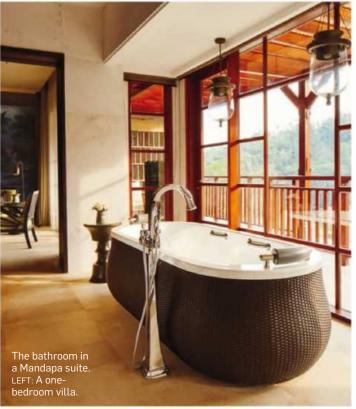


He laughed. "It's because they can't just walk away from their land. Their association goes too deep."

Guests can learn about this association through some literal immersion: spending a few hours ankle-deep in the irrigated rice paddies. Made Warnata, the Ubud-born recreation manager, gave me a sarong, a laborer's scarf ("To wipe the sweat!"), and a handful of rice seedlings. As frogs swam around our toes and swifts flew over our heads, we poked the seedlings into the velvety mud, using a Balinese technique that has been practiced since the ninth century.

THE ART OF PLACE

Mandapa's terrain is steep (butlers are always on hand to provide buggy rides) and the lobby and other buildings at the top of the valley are imposing. Yet the resort's use of thatch, volcanic basalts, and teak creates a sense of intimacy. The suites in the upper levels are generous—imperial, almost—with deep bathtubs set before views of the valley. The lower villas are lush, private, and sensual. Mine was a retreat of dark timbers built on the edge of the Ayung. At night the jade-colored pool was lit up; its stillness,



emphasized by a few floating frangipani blossoms, contrasted with the energetic river below a sheer cliff face covered with jungle vines—also lit in spectacular fashion.

Mandapa's riverside restaurant, Kubu, incorporates a recently devised Balinese building technique. The striking structure is made almost entirely out of bamboo, from the

> supports and the shingles to the teardropshaped wicker "cocoons" in which meals are served. The style, pioneered in Ubud, is a fusion of environmental architecture and high art. A two-story bamboo balé, or pavilion, called Green Camp, is the starting place

for natural activities for kids, like making a bamboo raft, mountain hiking, and looking at the stars.

LIFE CYCLES

The name Ubud derives from ubad, the Balinese word for medicine, a reference to the region's long tradition of healing. Mandapa has embraced this history by employing local practitioners to offer wellness treatments. I scheduled a session with Ketut Mursi, a blind healer who is said to divine illness with her fingers and cure it with reflexology and massage. My rational side was skeptical—then baffled when she relieved a pinched nerve in my shoulder.

As I was leaving the spa, I glanced down at the river and realized just how close authentic village life was: there was a naked man bathing in the Ayung.

When I mentioned it, Henriques didn't bat an eye. "It happens often," she said. "The men will bathe after working in the fields. This is their river and this is their ritual. We are the ones who need to adapt—they shouldn't have to change their procedures just because we have a hotel here." ritzcarlton.com; suites from \$750.

From Trash to Treasure

Trailblazing chef Ángel León's new restaurant is putting a quiet corner of southern Spain on the culinary map—and transforming the way people think about seafood.

Jay Cheshes goes in for a taste. PHOTOGRAPHS BY GUNNAR KNECHTEL



"THIS IS GOING TO BE the most beautiful restaurant you've ever seen," said Ángel León, as he stood in a 200-year-old stone salt mill overlooking a protected wetland outside the Andalusian seaport town of El Puerto de Santa María. I had come to meet the burly, soft-spoken Spanish chef because he'd been described to me as the Ferran Adrià of seafood, a true piscatory modernist. When we met, he was deep in preparations to transform the space into Spain's next great culinary destination—a supersize replacement for Aponiente, the Michelin two-starred spot he opened eight years ago in the center of town. At more than 19,000 square feet, the new location, which opened in September, is nine times as big as its predecessor, with a glass-enclosed kitchen and a high-tech

food lab outfitted with centrifuges and a special grill-oven hybrid. Outside, he showed me an area he planned to remake as a "garden of the sea," a system of salt ponds for sustainably raising fish and growing plankton, which appears on his menu.

León has made it his professional mission to champion "trash fish," challenging conventional wisdom about the marine life we eat by turning things that are often discarded—stingray-wing collagen, tuna blood-into haute cuisine. A native of Andalusia, he grew up fishing with his dad on weekends, watching the long-haul boats unload their prize catches from trawling nets that scooped up everything in their wake. "I'll never forget seeing seventy percent of the fish getting thrown away," he said. >>

Sardines smoked over olive-pit charcoal

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beyond / AT TABLE





FROM LEFT: Chef Ángel León outside his restaurant. housed in a former saltworks; the **Aponiente** kitchen team at work.

Using what others considered waste became an obsession, and when he finally opened his own restaurant, his all-seafood menu featured lessvaunted species like scorpion fish and moray eels. The general absence of the popular tuna, mackerel, sea bream, and hake didn't earn him many fans. "Nobody understood what we were doing," he said.

El Puerto is a mostly working-class community, whose population swells for a few weeks in the summer, when affluent families from Jerez and Seville move into magnificent beachside villas. It's also a stopover for visitors on their way to explore the sherry houses of Jerez and the fortifications of Moorish Cádiz, where Christopher Columbus started several of his voyages.

But these worldly sun-seekers are generally not interested in avant-garde cooking, and locals prefer the area's old-fashioned freidurías, where fried fish is served in paper cones. Business was so bad that, for a while, he thought about closing and trying his luck elsewhere. But his persistence paid off. León parlayed a guest-judge stint on Spain's Top Chef into his own weekly series, in which he travels around the country fishing and cooking with like-minded colleagues. Chef Dan Barber, of New York's Blue Hill—another pioneer of the "trash cooking" movement—called him a madman and a genius. And critics took note, too. A few Michelin stars later, the culinary pilgrims finally descended.

After giving me a tour of Aponiente's future, León introduced me to its past. My lunch at the original location was a meal of epic proportions: all 21 courses of it explored the rich biodiversity of the Bay of Cádiz, one delicious, novel dish at a time. There were sardines smoked over charcoal made from olive pits, cured mullet in a spiced saffron

soup, razor-clam gyoza, and cuttlefish carbonara. Midway through, León swung by the table clutching a vial of dark green slime: pure concentrated plankton. He put a spot of it on the back of my hand, indicating I should lick it up. "It's the ultimate superfood," he said, as I tasted the intense ocean flavor, "the building block of life."

Introducing plankton into high-end cooking has been one of León's most significant innovations. A quarter teaspoon, he says, can have as many omega-3s as 60 pounds of fish, depending on the species. Among the other big-name chefs who have since embraced the ingredient are Juan Mari Arzak in San Sebastián, Spain, and Pascal Barbot in Paris. León has also figured out how to make meatless facsimiles of Spanish pork sausages using a fatty swamp fish nobody eats.

The new location of Aponiente offers the chef a far better platform from which to advance this kind of culinary stagecraft. The dining room has wall-to-wall installations of silver- and bronzepainted seashells, soaring ceilings, and sculptural chairs meant to resemble fish fins. "Everything I do is about the sea," he said, "but at the old restaurant, you couldn't see any water."

Always in search of new innovations, León has been working with researchers at the University of Cádiz to study the mechanics of bioluminescence, a phenomenon that allows some marine organisms to glow in the dark. "My dream is for diners to be able to swallow the light," he said after lunch. "The waiters will come out with this light from the sea. It will be a spectacular moment." He paused, imagining the possibilities. "It will be magic." •

THE DETAILS Where to stay and what to see, page 184

The Real Florida

THE INFLUENCER'S GUIDE TO THE BEST OF THE STATE

From the subtropical paradise of the Florida Keys and Key West to Amelia Island's secluded beaches, Florida's famed destinations and hidden gems offer an endless array of outdoor adventures, posh lodgings, serene beaches, and haute cuisine.







The Influencer's Guide to the Sunshine State

SURROUNDED BY THE CLEAR BLUE WATERS of the

Atlantic and the emerald green waves of the Gulf of Mexico, Florida is one of the most visited states in America. Whether you're a first-timer or a savvy regular, chances are when you visit the Sunshine State you're looking for a unique travel experience, one that creates lasting memories of your own personal slice of this southern paradise. More than ever before, social media offers inspiration for finding that perfect getaway, with insider views and in-the-moment images that bring Florida to life in real-time. Flip through the following pages to discover tips and insights from a bevy of influencers. Let their expertise and experience take you inside the real Florida, from the relaxed, no-shirt-no-problem culture of the enchanting smaller islands to the high-end, high-energy nightlife of the booming cities by the sea.

From photographers to travel writers to chefs, the influencers featured on the following pages are the

in-the-know smart set that are continuously posting pictures on Instagram, writing blogs, and tweeting away on social media, making it easy for savvy followers to keep up with their endless adventures and daily escapades.

Beyond inspiring travel, these influencers are deeply engaged within their specific locale—some are obsessed with the exciting food culture that defines their city, while others are all about finding that perfect Florida sunrise on an almost empty beach. Their influence is innate and comes from their unending curiosity and authentic attachment to a place. This isn't always about where to go, but about what to look for, and how to make sure you don't miss the hidden beauty that makes Florida such a well-loved destination.

So come discover the real Florida from the perspective of the area's active influencers. You'll soon see that there's more to this tropical southern peninsula than meets the eye.



Summer in winter. Must be the sunshine.





The Real Florida

AS SOON AS YOU LAND in Orlando, you'll shed your jacket, loosen your collar, and roll up your sleeves. This is Florida with its top down, a different kind of winter wonderland. And after thawing out from your north-to-south trek, you'll be ready to indulge in some of the finest food, drink, and play the Sunshine State has to offer.

While still a family park mecca, Orlando has long outgrown its Mickey Mouse ears and is a favorite among couples and friends looking for a relaxing getaway. The Four Seasons Resort Orlando, a luxury golf hotel, has a 13,000-square-foot spa, a Tom Fazio-designed course, and a rooftop steakhouse.

Drive a couple of hours southwest to Sarasota for some of the best upscale boutique shopping and quaint cafés at St. Armands Circle, often compared to Beverly Hills' Rodeo Drive. The lively spot is only steps from gorgeous Lido Beach, a relaxing panorama of sugary white sand and turquoise water.

Naples, less than two hours south of Sarasota, has earned its reputation as one of the top luxury destinations in the United States with its romantic hotels, lush golf courses, fine restaurants, and quiet, pretty beaches. Hit Old Naples for some of the more eclectic shops and cafés, though the town is best enjoyed from a lounge chair or putting green.

And for a shot of energy and cultural buzz, Miami's rich art and music scene and world-renowned chefs attract visitors from all over the world. Whether it's at a South Beach lounge, on a Jewish food tour, or at one of the six-dozen exhibit spaces in the Wynwood Art District, you'll never be bored in Florida's Magic City.

In South Florida, treat yourself to a Cuban Frita, seasoned beef with a topping of ribbon-thin fries. Go to youtube.com/visitflorida and search fritas.



Florida influencer and travel photographer,

J.D. ANDREWS says, "Travel is my passion, creating inspiring and evocative videos and photographs is my profession, and social media is the way I connect with the world and share them both.

As a freelance videographer/photographer I'm constantly traveling the world. However, some of my favorite photos—like the Hollywood Beach sunrise above—have come from my own backyard here in Florida."

FOLLOW J.D. ON TWITTER AT @EARTHXPLORER





Inside The Palm Beaches

JUST A SHORT DRIVE NORTH FROM MIAMI, The Palm Beaches present the perfect getaway for those seeking the classic Florida combination of vintage glamour, mouthwatering cuisine, and natural wonder.

With 38 unique cities and towns that make up 15 distinct districts, The Palm Beaches are both an ideal destination for family vacations and grown-up getaways. Home to the world-renowned resort destination, The Breakers Palm Beach, established in 1896 by Henry M. Flagler, the region is now a bustling mecca of high-end boutiques, eclectic restaurants, year-round nightlife, and quintessential seaside adventures.

Calm ocean breezes are a constant in The Palm Beaches, and with 47 miles of coastline and waterways, there's no shortage of in- or on-the-water adventures. Spend your days sunbathing, swimming, fishing, or waterskiing. For a taste of adventure, head to the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, where you'll find 221 square miles of the Everglades just begging to be explored.

Not surprisingly, food is also a star attraction here, with over 2,000 restaurants that range from intimate fine-dining destinations serving farm-to-table cuisine to fun local eateries cooking up seasonal specialties.

Whatever your whim, The Palm Beaches beckon you to hit the beach, indulge in farm-fresh food, and explore the natural beauty that makes this spot a classic on Florida's must-see list.

It's well known that Henry Flagler is largely responsible for establishing Palm Beach as a destination. Visitors should start out at the Flagler Museum and tour his Gilded Age estate, Whitehall.

Local influencer and celebrated chef, **CLAY CONLEY** recommends heading to the Green Market in Downtown West Palm Beach for fresh produce and premade delights. For brunch, Conley enjoys the sophisticated menu and serene courtyard at Café Boulud, or the weekend Indian breakfast at The Pelican Restaurant in Lake Worth. For lunch, he likes the Four Seasons' breezy outside area or the Oriental Food Market. For dinner, it's Avocado Grill, La Sirena, Coolinary Cafe, or his own highly touted Buccan.

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Stylish Stays in Miami Beach

IN THE INDISPUTABLE HEART of Florida's epic sun and sand scene lies the ever-sizzling Miami Beach. A dazzling coastal metropolis, Miami Beach is one of the state's star destinations, famed for its wide sundrenched beaches, colorful Art Deco architecture, and a food scene that's off the charts. A stay in one of the spectacular oceanfront hotels here is nothing short of fabulous. Check out two of the area's signature destination hotels: Carillon Miami Beach and Eden Roc Resort Miami Beach.

Situated on more than 750 linear feet of pristine white sand beach, the **Carillon Miami Beach** (carillonhotel.com; 866/800-3858; pictured above, left) is a true Miami landmark redesigned by renowned architect David Rockwell. A classic all-suite luxury lifestyle hotel, this iconic locale offers four swimming pools, a world-renowned spa and fitness center (including the incomparable European-inspired Thermal Experience), complimentary fitness classes, and impeccable service. With oceanfront access and crave-worthy cuisine that suits every whim, this revitalized property lets guests design their own personalized Miami retreat.

Situated on the oceanfront in the heart of Miami Beach, the Eden Roc Resort Miami Beach (edenrocmiami.com; 866/281-6375) has been drawing crowds after the November opening of a signature Nobu Restaurant and Bar (pictured above, right). The new dining destination is a pre-cursor to the highly anticipated opening of the Nobu Hotel at Eden Roc Miami Beach, slated for October, 2016. Designed by David Rockwell, the new hotel will showcase lush, natural materials and will fuse layers of the Nobu brand's lively and luxurious aesthetic with elements of Eden Roc's classic heritage. Featuring 210 guest rooms in the hotel's legendary tower, a 20,000-squarefoot spa and fitness center, and a new luxurious pool, the Nobu Hotel will represent a perfect balance of luxury, fun, craft, and theater.

One of the most significant modern and contemporary international art fairs in North America, Art Basel Miami Beach (artbasel.com/miami-beach), takes place this year from Dec. 3–6.

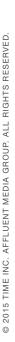


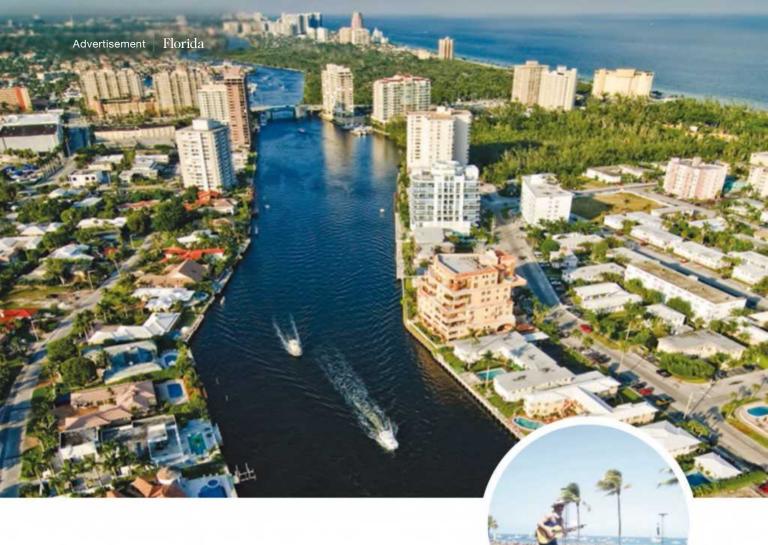
There is a threshold you cross here where you leave the ephemeral reality of the rest of the world and enter into a hideaway of timeless creativity. Eden Roc changes your view from more than just a terrace.

EdenRocMiami.com

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Finding Fort Lauderdale

WITH ITS PRISTINE BEACHES, excellent dining options, fabulous shopping, and five-star beachfront hotels, Fort Lauderdale offers a perfect, sun-filled getaway. Discover the tempting blend of family fun and grown-up playtime that makes this destination such an irresistible escape.

Those looking for an urban-inspired getaway, can experience a romantic gondola ride along the area's quaint canals, take in world-class entertainment, and browse the amazing lineup of shops on happening Las Olas Boulevard. Peruse the always-active Riverwalk Arts & Entertainment District for stunning museums such as the NSU Art Museum, home to over 6,000 international art works and touring exhibitions, and the Bonnet House Museum & Gardens designed by noted painter Frederic Clay Bartlett. At the renowned Broward Performing Arts Center you'll find everything from the best of Broadway to ballets, operas, and award-winning musical performances.

For the nightlife seeker, there's an unbeatable food and fun culture that's not to be missed. For fresh seafood accompanied by live music and a funky vibe, head to YOLO. Discover sophisticated tunes at

Local Influencer and national travel writer and LauderBlogger, BOB KNOTTS recommends spending the holidays "Fort Lauderdale style" with the Hollywood Beach Candy Cane Parade, Christmas on Las Olas, the renowned Winterfest Boat Parade, and the Orange Bowl Downtown Countdown on New Year's Eve. For music fans, he suggests Fort Lauderdale's many open-air festivals, including the beachside Tortuga Music Festival and Lauderdale Live in the Park.

FOLLOW BOB KNOTTS ON SUNNY.ORG/BLOG

Blue Jean Blues. For the quintessential 24/7 diner spot, head to the local favorite, the Floridian Restaurant, where the late night grub always hits the spot. And you can't leave town, without catching the iconic live mermaid show, held every Friday and Saturday night at the Wreck Bar.

Be sure to save some time for exploring the area's unique natural wonders, too. Greater Fort Lauderdale is home to 23 miles of gorgeous sandy beaches, many are Blue Wave-certified and all are family-friendly and made for exploring. Enjoy the cove-like sand and glassy smooth water of Deerfield Beach. View the picturesque Hillsboro Lighthouse at tranquil Hillsboro Beach. And dine on straight-from-the-sea fare at the fishing pier on Dania Beach while soaking up the scenery. When you're ready to hit the waves, try kayaking, parasailing, or scuba diving—or dive straight in for a refreshing swim.

Take a daytrip to the seductive wilderness of the Everglades. The unique sub-tropical ecosystem is home to alligators, birds, and various types of wildlife. Take an airboat ride and tour mangroves, sawgrass prairies, pine flatwoods, and cypress swamps. And don't forget to keep your ears open for the distinctive squawk of the local wild parrots.

Fort Lauderdale offers an abundance of outdoor adventures and entertainment options, making it a remarkable destination to return to again and again.

When you cruise the palm-lined canals of the Intracoastal Waterway in Fort Lauderdale, you'll understand why they call it the "Venice of America." You might even spot a manatee.



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Experience South Florida's premier destination for fun and entertainment when you play and stay at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood. The AAA Four-Diamond-rated hotel features 469 luxury guest rooms and suites, award-winning restaurants, a Hard Rock-inspired casino floor, a tropical lagoon-style pool and Beach Club, a Rock Spa, and unique nightlife experiences. The luxury resort now also features L Bar, the hotel's contemporary lounge and cocktail bar, and Kuro, the hotel's newest culinary innovation that wows diners with its handcrafted, new-style Japanese cuisine.



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Seminole Hard Rock Hollywood is home to South Florida's largest casino, with more than 100 table games, 2,000 of the most popular slots, high-limit table and slot rooms, and a stand-alone Poker Room, located just outside the casino doors in Seminole Paradise, where the fun continues.

For more information, call (954) 327-ROCK or 1-800-937-0010 or visit seminolehardrockhollywood.com



KURO

Named by Zagat as one of its Top 10 Restaurants to Try Now and by New Times Broward-Palm Beach as Best New Restaurant in Broward County (2015), Kuro features a family-style kaiseki menu, designed with sharing in mind and moves from lighter fare to bolder, richer dishes.



HARD ROCK LIVE

Hard Rock Live plays host to the hottest acts as Hollywood's ultimate live music venue. The 5,500 seat, state-of-theart indoor arena features top-name in music, comedy and sporting events Noteworthy performers include Bruce Springsteen, Eric Clapton, Billy Joel, Carlos Santana, Pitbull, Jerry Seinfeld and more.



Discover Florida's Hollywood

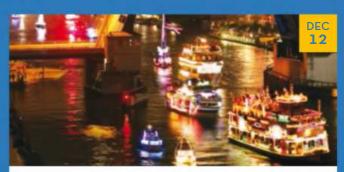
WITH A CHARMING VILLAGE-LIKE FEEL.

Hollywood Beach is a leisure-lover's dream escape. Ideally located at the southern end of Greater Fort Lauderdale, this quaint town boasts gorgeous white sand beaches, Art Deco architecture, and a Sunday farmer's market that showcases local produce. The two-and-a-half-mile bricked oceanfront promenade that makes up Hollywood Beach Broadwalk is the perfect place for long walks, jogs, rollerblading, and bicycle rides.

Add a serious splash of glamour to your visit with a stay at Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino (seminolehardrockhollywood.com; 866/502-7529; pictured above). The area's premier entertainment destination features 469 luxury guest rooms and suites, award-winning restaurants, more than 100 table games and 2,000 of the most popular slots, a stand-alone poker room, a Rock Spa, and unique nightlife experiences. Stay-andplay amenities include a lagoon-style pool area and Beach Club, high-limit table and slot rooms, and L Bar – the hotel's contemporary lounge and cocktail bar. The resort's newest culinary innovation, Kuro, is a luxe and socially vibrant new-style Japanese restaurant located inside the hotel, overlooking the tropical pool oasis.

greater FORT LAUDERDALE HELLO SUNNY

Check out these Greater Fort Lauderdale events. Day or night, there's always something sunny going on.



Warm up to the sights and sounds of the world-famous Seminole Hard Rock Winterfest Boat Parade, Dec 12th, when 100 vessels cruise down the Intracoastal Waterway lighting up the night sky. Visit winterfestparade.com for details.



Ring in the New Year with Billy Joel, December 31st New Year's Eve at BB&T Center. For Tickets, visit ticketmaster.com or call 1-800-745-3000



Greater Fort Lauderdale's culinary scene will be highlighted during the inaugural edition of the Taste Fort Lauderdale Series, Feb 24-28 at the Food Network & Cooking Channel South Beach Wine & Food Festival presented by FOOD & WINE. Visit sobefest.com

Visit sunny.org/playbook to plan your escape.



Escape to the Florida Keys

PERHAPS BEST KNOWN for Ernest Hemingway's landmark hideout in Key West, the Florida Keys have long been a seaside haven for eccentrics and escape artists. But this archipelago is also a traveler's paradise.

Heading south on the Florida Keys Overseas Highway, Key Largo is the first of the Keys. It bisects the beginning of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, featuring the only living contiguous coral reef in the continental U.S., and the unique wilderness of Everglades National Park.

Islamorada is known as the sportfishing capital of the world. Offshore, anglers can pursue sailfish and dolphin (mahi-mahi). Bonefish, permit, and tarpon are prized in the backcountry. Want fresh fish? Catch a vellowtail snapper on the reef and bring it back to be cooked that evening at one of many local restaurants.

Marathon is perfect for family-friendly travel. Enjoy interactive learning experiences at the Turtle Hospital and Dolphin Research Center. Feed the fish at Florida Keys Aquarium Encounters. And step back in time at tiny Pigeon Key, once a construction basecamp for Henry Flagler's Florida Keys Over-Sea Railroad.

Big Pine and the Lower Keys offer serene natural attractions including the National Key Deer Refuge. Big Pine is also home to Looe Key Reef, one of the Keys' best snorkeling reefs and site of July's annual Underwater Music Festival.

The southernmost city in the continental U.S. is the irreverent and romantic Key West, where historic charm, shady palm-lined streets, modern galleries, and award-winning restaurants draw visitors from around the globe. Explore Duval Street, featuring lively bars and cool cocktails in sidewalk cafés. Visit Ernest Hemingway's home, a Spanish colonial villa (and now a national landmark) on Whitehead Street. Or take a day trip to Dry Tortugas National Park and historic Fort Jefferson.

Whether you're lured to the region by the laidback atmosphere, natural landscapes, or world-class fishing or diving, the Florida Keys offer dream-like destinations that will make you want to drop anchor and stay awhile. fla-keys.com | #SeizeTheKeys #flkeys

Made from small Key limes that are found throughout the region, Key Lime Pie originated in the Florida Keys in the early 20th century and many local bakeries claim their pie is the best.





From diving in Key Largo and fishing in Islamorada to family fun in Marathon, tranquil Big Pine Key and quirky Key West, there's more than one reason to point yourself towards The Florida Keys & Key West.

fla-keys.com 1.800.fla.keys

KEY WEST BIG PINE KEY & THE LOWER KEYS

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305-292-5300 sunsetkeycottages.com



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305-451-3438 keylimesailingclub.com







The Haven of Amelia Island

THIRTEEN MILES LONG and two miles wide, Amelia Island is an unspoiled oasis where ocean breezes beckon pure relaxation. With its charming seaport character, lush maritime forests and marshlands, world-class golf, and irresistible waterfront restaurants, it's easy to see how this island is one of the best-loved islands in the country.

Whether you're looking for a relaxing family vacation where the whole gang can get away from it all, or planning a trip for two where sunsets and stargazing are the only items on the agenda, Amelia Island is the perfect place to unwind. There's a nice mix of accommodations from quaint bed-and-breakfasts to plush resort hotels and no matter where you stay, the ocean is always the focal point.

Enjoy a horse-drawn carriage ride through the historic downtown, join a meandering riverboat excursion down the Intracoastal waterways, or try kayaking through the salt marsh at Talbot Island State Park—there's no end to island adventures.

The southern pearl of the Sea Island chain, this timeless barrier island takes its name from Princess Amelia, daughter of George II of Great Britain.



Amelia Island influencer, Chef KENNY GILBERT, who's perhaps best known for his appearance on "Top Chef" Season 7 says, "Amelia Island is the best kept secret. Beautiful beaches, friendly locals, gracious Southern Hospitality, and a rich history that keeps you busy exploring." Check out his new restaurant, Gilbert's Underground Kitchen, in Amelia Island's Fernandina Beach for some fine Southern-inspired fare.

FOLLOW CHEF GILBERT ON TWITTER AT @CHEFKENNYG37, OR INSTAGRAM AT @CHEFKENNYG





ONLY ONE FLORIDA BEACH RISES ABOVE THE REST.

If you think all Florida beaches are the same, come visit legendary Amelia Island. With its historical inns, world-class seaside resorts, gracious Southern hospitality and 13 miles of unspoiled beaches, Amelia Island stands alone.

AMELIAISLAND.COM



THATPLACE

Where the rest of the world disappears and all that remains is the two of us.

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The Best Little Beach Towns

If you're out to explore some of the lesser-known beach towns in Florida, you won't be disappointed. With over 1,350 miles of shoreline, Florida is a veritable smorgasbord of coastal enclaves, quiet beaches, picturesque boardwalks, and art-fueled towns that will leave you feeling elated you've ventured off the beaten path.

DELRAY BEACH

Situated between Boca Raton and West Palm Beach, Delray Beach is known as a little town with a big personality. Head for a leisurely stroll down the always-thriving Atlantic Avenue (the longest main street in all of Florida) where upscale shops, numerous galleries, buzzing outdoor restaurants, and candy shops delight the senses.

DESTIN

Known as the "world's luckiest fishing village," Destin is home to powdery white beaches, warm emerald waters, dolphin sightings, and restaurants and shopping galore. Located on the Florida panhandle, the area is well known for its southern-inspired seafood—from fresh Apalachicola oysters to seafood gumbo. Because of its plentiful underwater population, snorkeling is a must-do. You're sure to see rays, sea turtles, fish, and nurse sharks just for starters.

Where to Stay

HILTON SANDESTIN BEACH GOLF RESORT & SPA

A much-loved beach destination that just celebrated its 30th anniversary, Hilton Sandestin Beach Golf Resort & Spa—located right on Miramar Beach—has been a cherished resort for generations. Whether you're planning a family getaway or a winter escape for two, Hilton Sandestin offers an array of plush accommodations to choose from, as well as four championship golf courses, seven delightful dining options, and the world-class Serenity by the sea Spa. During the day, guests can enjoy the beach's famous powdery sand and the resort's three different pools. In the evening, the AAA-Four-Diamond Seagar's Prime Steaks & Seafood Restaurant offers the perfect setting for an evening of indulgence. 800/559-1805; hiltonsandestinbeach.com



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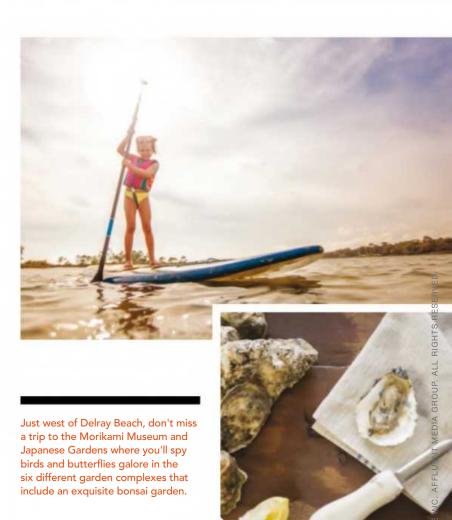
The Best Little Beach Towns continued...

ANNA MARIA ISLAND

Without a high-rise in sight, the seductively sleepy town of Anna Maria is situated on a seven-mile strip of white sand beach between the Gulf of Mexico and peninsular Florida. This is the perfect hideaway for romantic getaways. Spend afternoons on the turquoise water of Coquina Beach, then enjoy quiet evenings feasting on fresh seafood at any number of waterfront fine dining establishments.

ST. AUGUSTINE

Established in 1565 by Spanish Admiral Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, St. Augustine's rich 450-year-old history makes this an absolute mustsee on Florida's northeastern coastline. On St. George Street you'll travel back in time as you stroll through the historic downtown, while the limestone walls of Castillo de San Marcos harken back to the perilous days of pirate invasions.





Queens of the Mountain

Do women learn to ski differently than men? A raft of new single-sex programs aims to prove they do. Jayme Moye takes to the slopes with an all-female class to find for herself. PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSICA SAMPLE

STANDING AT THE TOP of a black-diamond mogul ski run at 11,775 feet in Aspen Snowmass, I waited for the buzzkiller inside my head to decree, "You can't do this." Or at least, "You shouldn't do this." I'm only an intermediate-level skier, after all, and this was advanced terrain in the Rocky Mountains. The last time I had attempted a run like this—a couple of seasons earlier, with a male friend-I had ended up taking off my skis and walking. There are only so many hard falls a woman pushing 40 can, or should, sustain on what's supposed to be a vacation.

This time, though, my inner naysayer was silent. The only sounds were the soft whoosh of wind in the boughs of snow-covered pines and the >>

snippets of conversation carried on the crisp mountain air from a nearby chairlift. And then the voice of my instructor, Susan Lee, saying, "You've got this."

Hell, maybe I do, I thought. The way Susan put it, my classmates—Gigi, 56, from New York, and Nicole, 37, from Ohio—and I just needed to link three turns, then stop and regroup. Three turns, three moguls, 30 seconds of my life. Suddenly it didn't seem so bad.

So it goes with the Women's Edge program, a four-day intensive ski course for women, taught by women, offered by Aspen Snowmass from January to mid-March. The instruction style is based on the premise that women often prefer to learn in a fun, noncompetitive environment. Skiers who've experienced

The writer, second from left, with her Women's Edge classmates and their instructor, Susan Lee, second from right.



single-sex training say they had previously underestimated their skills on the slopes, mostly because they compared themselves with men (who, due to body chemistry and physiology, are generally stronger, faster, and more apt to take risks). Removing men from the equation gives women a different baseline to measure their skills against—a "truing up" that can instantly boost their confidence.

Not only does the all-female experience elevate your skiing, it also helps foster friendship with a group of similarly single-minded women. What it doesn't offer: spa treatments, shopping, or other stereotypically female pursuits. Nor is it a "learn to ski" program. Participants in Women's Edge are mostly intermediate to advanced skiers, fit enough to spend multiple full-day sessions on the slopes.

Back on the black run, Susan led and we followed. I did my best to retrace the graceful line she wove between mounds of snow the size of Volkswagen Beetles. "Dive down the mogul," she called over her shoulder, referring to a body alignment technique we'd practiced earlier, on less threatening terrain. I grimaced and dived, struggling to control my speed by making smooth, round turns before skidding to a stop beside Susan. Three turns down, about 30 more to go.

Before I'd had the chance to look up, we'd reached the end of the run. Susan held up her pole so Gigi, Nicole, and I could clank it in a skier's high five. As we stood, beaming, triumphant, and gasping for air, it was hard to believe I had met these women only yesterday.

"Women's Edge is not about coddling women; it's about empowering them to be the best skiers they can be," said Barb Hurwitz, the coordinator of Aspen's Women's Ski Programs, over an après-ski drink at the Limelight Hotel>>>

AMERICA'S TOP FIVE WOMEN-ONLY SKI PROGRAMS

Women's Edge Aspen Snowmass, Colorado

Course fees include small-group lessons (Aspen insists on classes of no more than five students) and an après-ski event on the last day. \$664 for four days; aspensnowmass. com.

Women's Only Weekend (WOW)

Sun Valley, Idaho Open to both skiers and snowboarders: includes lessons, lift tickets, après-ski events, and video analysis with Sun Valley's top female instructors. \$850 for three days: sunvalley.com.

Women's Intermediate-**Advanced** Ski Camp

Alta, Utah Includes lessons. lift tickets, a fournight stay at Alta Lodge, and the option to try out high-end demo skis. \$2,541 for three days; altalodge.com.

Elevate Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Includes lessons, lift tickets, optional yoga and stretching sessions, and an après-ski program featuring talks by professional women skiers. \$1,705 for four days; jacksonhole.com.

Women's Ski Camp

Killington, Vermont Includes lessons led by Olympic gold medalist Donna Weinbrecht, lift tickets, lunches, and a welcome party on the first night. \$349 for two days; killington.com.





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/ beyond / field notes

later that day. The term edge refers to finding your limit on the mountain, then pushing past it. The staff, picked from applicants from around the world, are among the strongest skiers in the industry, each a level-three certified ski instructor or higher.

Aspen isn't the only destination offering serious women-only ski programs. Though the concept has been around for two decades or more, in the past five years, almost all the major resorts in the U.S., and several in British Columbia, have embraced the trend. Offerings during last year's season ranged from specialized camps focused on skiing extreme terrain in Washington to weekend retreats honing skills with an Olympicgold-medalist skier in Vermont.

Demand is high—which Aspen attributes to the fact that female skiers direct their competitive instincts toward self-improvement, rather than pitting themselves against their peers. "Women aspire to do more on the mountain, in the same way men do," Barb said. "We just go about it in a different way."

I absolutely wanted to do more on the mountain. A Colorado resident for 16 years, I had taken up skiing five years earlier and felt stuck at the intermediate level, lacking both the skills and the confidence to handle steeps and bumps. But I wasn't sold on the idea that women execute skiing skills differently than men. In my experience, when you lose control and face-plant into an icy mogul, the mountain doesn't care whether you're a man or a woman.

I was put with Gigi and Nicole because we all aspired to become more confident skiers—though they displayed far less skepticism about the women-only approach than I did. In total, there were 10 of us participating in Women's Edge, broken out into four groups, each with a dedicated ski pro. Small group size is one of the hallmarks of women-only skiing, no matter which resort you're at, as it allows for individualized attention (something the teachers say women often fail to insist on in the

context of a larger, mixed group). As a group of four, we were a natural fit for both the two-person and four-person chairlifts, and it felt like being on the slopes with a group of girlfriends—something I realized I'd never done.

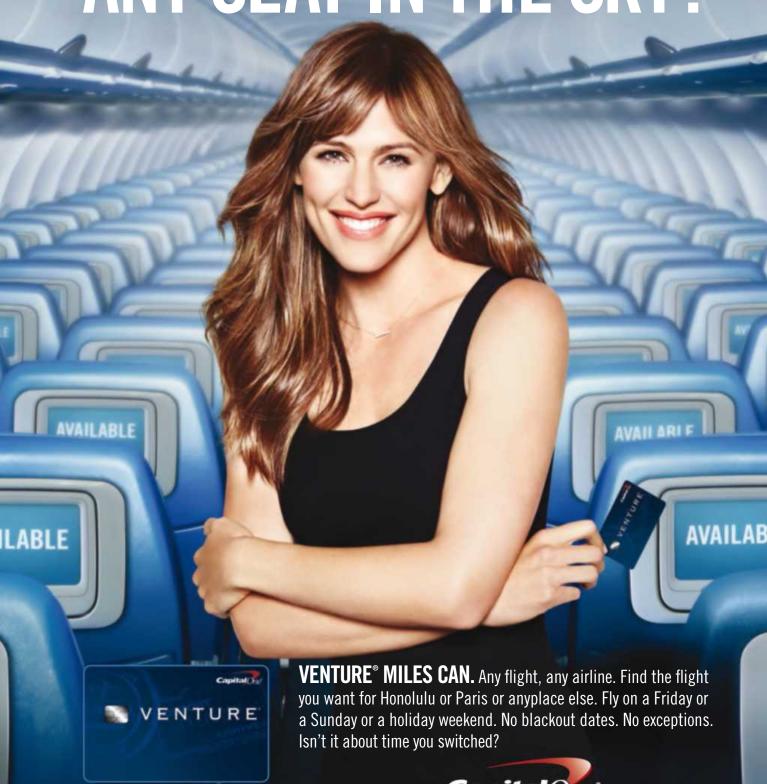
I found out a lot about my teammates while sitting on those chairlifts. Both Gigi and Nicole were Women's Edge repeats, although they hadn't met before. They return each year for an intense dose of skiing with other athletic, goal-focused women. Both were married, but Nicole's husband didn't ski, and Gigi disliked skiing with her family because she always felt like she was slowing them down.

We discussed the merits of women-only instruction during one such ride. Susan admitted that the mechanics of skiing don't vary much between a man and a woman, but in her experience, learning style does. "Women are more inclined to pay attention to details, to slow down, do things on easier terrain to gain confidence before going straight to harder terrain," she says.

A light snow began to fall, dusting us and the slope below with a fresh coat of powder. I considered Susan's point. Up until then I had mostly skied with my boyfriend, and had always felt timid in comparison. I took longer to warm up, and navigated tough terrain much more slowly. But with my Women's Edge group, I was the hard-charger of the group, preferring to be first in line after Susan down the mountain, and skiing faster than the others. In a group of women, I felt much more like myself.

The power of engaging with the mountain on my own terms crystallized on the last day. My classmates and I rolled into a warm-up run with a gradual start, and I was raring to go. I turned around to see if the others were close behind me, but instead of craning my neck, I let my entire body spin 180 degrees—something I've seen my boyfriend do when looking back for me. I'd never had the guts to try it myself. Or maybe it's more that I'd never had the opportunity, because he was always in front.





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OVER THE PAST SEVERAL years, a number of Melbournians have decamped to the Mornington Peninsula to become trailblazing Pinot Noir producers, Slow Food-inspired restaurateurs, and gentlemen farmers peddling vine-ash goat cheeses. Food-obsessed city folks looking for a quick escape used to get here via traffic-ridden country roads. But a new highway has put the region's handful of tiny towns—all within a 10-mile radius—a scenic one-hour drive from Melbourne. On a recent weekend I took in the region's bounty along with some spectacular beaches, and found the true essence of Australian relaxation. >>





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FRIDAY

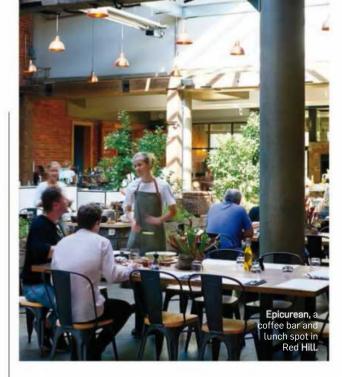
4 p.m. I The drive south Spread out along a 25-mile stretch of the M3 highway is a series of four arresting, oversize public sculptures. One nearly stopped me in my tracks: the ghostly *Hotel* by artist Callum Morton, a sort of life-size faux resort.

As the road veers toward the coast, a series of seaside villages along Port Phillip Bay begins with the Victorian-era town of Sorrento-the longtime domain of off-duty politicians and Melbourne's blue bloods-and culminates with Portsea, the last town on the western tip of the peninsula. The real action now is a bit inland, in the charming towns of Red Hill, Merricks, and Main Ridge. None of them is bigger than a thousand people, but the top-notch wineries and farm-to-table restaurants there could serve a vastly greater population.

6 p.m. | Checking in

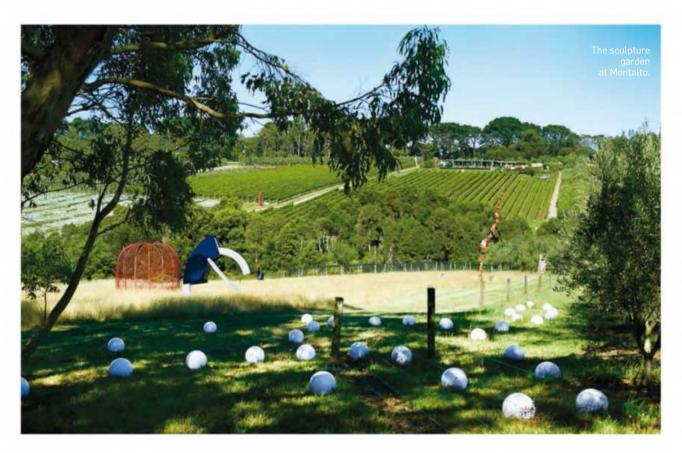
I'd booked a room at Tussie Mussie, an upscale, sevenroom country inn in Merricks North whose name translates loosely to "a posy of flowers" in old English vernacular. My suite, the Old Laundry, had heated bathroom floors and canvas window shades, giving it the feel of a chic safari tent rather than former housekeeping quarters. There was a basket of eggs and bread with my name on it, a gas grill on the terrace, and a kitchen garden where I was told to pick my own produce: heavy, golden squash; tiny, pungent chiles; and a cornucopia of fresh wild herbs. Breakfast here, I learned, would be DIY...and delicious. boutiqueretreats.com. au; doubles from \$333.

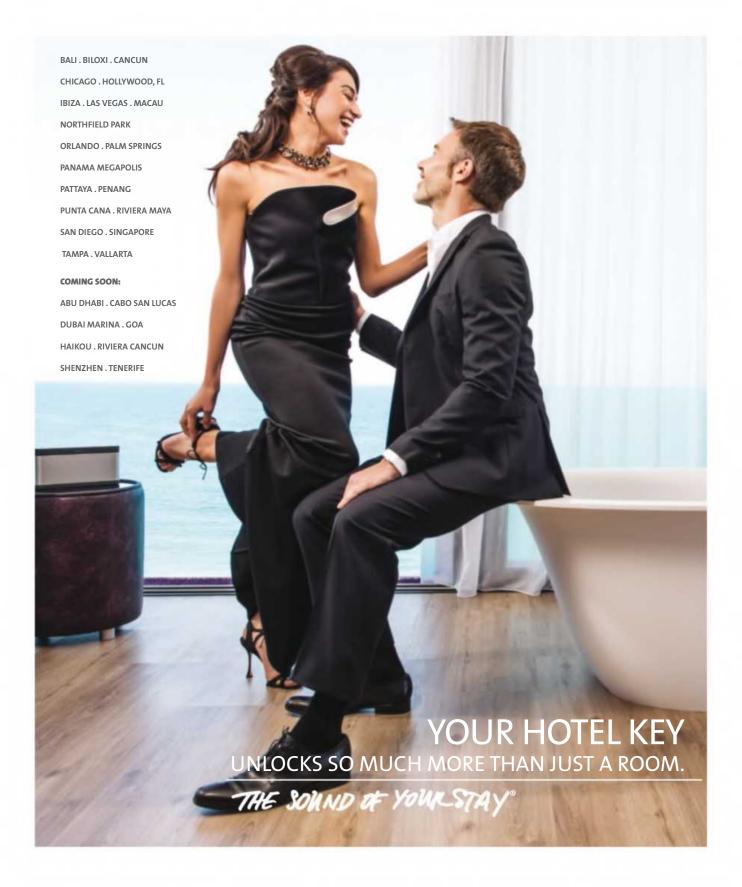
8 p.m. | Dinner at Montalto When they founded their vineyard and olive grove in 2002, John and Wendy Mitchell were



just two Francophiles with big dreams of creating a kind of Burgundy Down Under. Now they're considered peninsula pioneers. The vineyard—on a ridge overlooking tidy rows of jade-green vines and monumental artworks acquired

through the family's annual sculpture prize—has a classic sylvan beauty but is also cutting-edge. At their acclaimed restaurant, I ordered a salad of slow-cooked organic eggs, fresh peas, and Grana Padano that perfectly summed up >>









the area's deceptively simple, Mediterranean-inspired cooking. And, of course, there was wine: a beautifully paired glass of the vineyard's spicy but delicate Pinot Noir. Red Hill South; montalto.com.au; prix fixe menus from \$53.

SATURDAY

9:30 a.m. | Café culture

Aussies insist on good coffee, and here they find it at glossy newcomer Epicurean, a onestop gourmet shop in a fancified tin shed. In front, there's a bakery and larder; farther in is an atrium-like restaurant where you can linger over flat whites. (At lunchtime, stylish couples will descend for pizzas made in the wood-fired oven.) I found it all fabulously convivial and urbane in a slightly disorienting way—just when I was wondering if this was really rural Australia, the barista informed me of a tether out back, in case I'd come on horseback. Red Hill; theepicurean.com.au.

10:30 a.m. | A morning dip When I arrived at the Japanese-style Peninsula Hot Springs, an atmospheric mist still clung to the hilltops. From the blissful comfort of a 104-degree pool, I watched the fog disperse, revealing panoramic views of verdant hills and endless eucalyptus trees. Dozens of steaming thermal rock pools, set among wild grasses and aromatic

plants, cascaded down the slope. I would have liked to try them all, but there was also a hammam, sauna, and spa, where I was unable to resist the Mala Mapi, a full-body mud mask and salt scrub based on Aboriginal herbalism. Fingal; peninsulahotsprings.com.



12:30 p.m. | Wine tastings, part one

In the foothills of Red Hill, I stopped to chat with Zoe Crittenden and her dad, Garry, at Crittenden Estate. They offered me a taste of their Saludos, a fiercely acidic riff on Spanish Txakoli that's emblematic of their offbeat style. "It's just fun. We try not to overthink it," said Zoe, who could have been talking about peninsula life in general. From there, I drove to Stonier, in Merricks, one of the area's oldest wineries. Its focus on classic Pinot Noir is a perfect foil to Crittenden. I settled down at a communal farm table with a glass and a cheese plate; nearby, two rugged chaps were hard at work, knee-deep in vats of crushed grapes. crittendenwines.com.au; stonier.com.au.

2 p.m. | Late lunch at Ten **Minutes by Tractor**

This celebrated young winery has views that could pass for Tuscany, but its ambitious, white-tablecloth restaurant puts a focus on everything Australian. The head chef, >>



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/ beyond / weekend

Stuart Bell, a Melbourne transplant and one of the peninsula's rising stars, welcomed me with snapper from Port Phillip Bay, Flinders Island wallaby, and Red Hill cheeses. He explained that the winery's name was a nod to the three founding families, whose vines were all 10 minutes away from one another by tractor. Every dish looked like edible artwork, painstakingly composed and singing with honest flavors. My favorite was cured kingfish with pickled beets. Main Ridge; tenminutesbytractor.com.au; tasting menus from \$50.

4 p.m. | Wine Tastings, part two

Merrick's most striking winery is Port Phillip Estate, a towering, sculptural building set on more than 170 acres of impeccably manicured grounds. Inside, a dramatic staircase leads to a subterranean bottling plant and wine library where I sat down for a glass of citrusy Red Hill Chardonnay, minimally filtered to preserve the flavors of the region's volcanic terroir. portphillipestate.com.au.

8:30 p.m. | Dinner at the Long Table

One of Mornington's best dining rooms is located, oddly enough, in a strip mall. There, bespectacled chef-owner Andy Doughton preaches the gospel of local eating—he has his own personal grower for ingredients like Jerusalem



artichokes, fennel pollen, and pine mushrooms. An appetizer of black rice crisps with misohorseradish mayo turned out to be irresistibly addictive. The follow-up, an heirloom tomato salad with red-vein sorrel, buffalo mozzarella, and a curious "sponge" made from grapevine ash, was by far the best thing I've ever eaten in a shopping center. Red Hill South; thelong table.com.au; entrées \$22-\$27.

SUNDAY

10 a.m. I Point Leo Beach As I drove down the area's country roads, the scenery was all pine trees and vinecovered hills, until suddenly, the sea emerged. I saw a sign for Point Leo Road, an artery leading to a beach of the same name. I'd heard it was beloved by Melbourne surfers, so on an impulse I turned toward it. Much to my surprise, the waves were relatively calm as I took a swim in the shade of a weathered wooden lifeguard tower.

12:30 p.m. | Lunch at La Pétanque

This French restaurant is a secret oasis hemmed in by pines, vineyards, and olive trees. The sun had left me starving, so my Port Phillip Bay snapper with zucchini ribbons and garlic purée was

a welcome treat. Out back, there was a *pétanque* court next to fragrant lavender hedges, where I spontaneously joined a friendly couple for a languid game. *Main Ridge; lapetanque.com.au; entrées from \$28.*

7 p.m. | Dinner at the Deck Bar & Bistro

The sleepy oceanside town of Flinders was once the southernmost end of the telegraph line that spanned the continent, and it still has a bracing, end-of-the-world feeling to it. One ambitious restaurant, Terminus, at the trendy Flinders hotel, has put this venerable town on the modern map. But fine dining felt too high-minded for my Sunday mood. So I made my way to the Deck, also at the hotel, where the lightas-air fish-and-chips was accompanied by green beans with preserved lemon—a far cry from the greasy, newspaper-wrapped version I remember from childhood summers. Watching the sun going down over the ocean, I considered extending my getaway with a jaunt to the Yarra Valley (about an hour and a half away), but the road back to Melbourne would have to do. flindershotel.com. au; entrées \$17-\$27. 3





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RAISINGTHEBAR Now that handcrafted cocktails and smartly dressed mixologists are de rigueur in their after-hours are advancing their street and smartly dressed mixologists are advancing their street.

Now that handcrafted cocktails and smartly dressed mixologists are advancing their street.

Cape Town, with its techno temples, with a number of cities are advance them.

Cape Town, with its techno temples.

Cape Town, with its techno temples.

Louise a glass to. Cheers!

Scenes in unexpected and inventive ways. From Dars, we've targeted four urban hem.

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LONDON WILL BE STAYING UP LATE

> With plans for the city's 24-hour weekend Tube service nearly finalized, the days of downing a pint and racing for the last train home at 11:45 are almost over. **Take the Underground** to these hot spots for a night of partying into the wee hours.

BY ALICE TATE

DINNER & DRINKS Chances are, unless you've visited the O2 Arena, you've never thought of partying in Greenwich before—it is, after all, at least a £40 cab ride from anywhere. Save your pounds and hop the Jubilee Line to kick-start your evening at Craft London (craft-london. co.uk), celebrated chef Stevie Parle's latest venture. The Tom Dixon-designed space is rich and sexy, all copper, tweed, and limestone, with impressive views of the city. Parle uses almost exclusively local produce in his New British menu, which includes such dishes as langoustines with lardo and clay-baked duck with broad-bean-and-barley "miso." While you're in the area, don't pass up a visit to **Meantime Brewery Tasting Rooms** (meantimebrewing.com). Sample four of its 10 brews with a flight poured straight from the maturation tanks and kegs.

COCKTAIL-INDULGING Shoreditch residents have been able to keep the intimate, subterranean bar Joyeux Bordel (joyeux bordel.com) off the radar since the four French gents of Paris's Experimental Cocktail Club opened it in April. With the Tube's coming late schedule, the place will no longer be a neighborhood secret. Hop the train to Shoreditch High Street station and linger over champagne >>

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DISCOVER AWE-INCLUSIVETM LUXURY at PALACE RESORTS

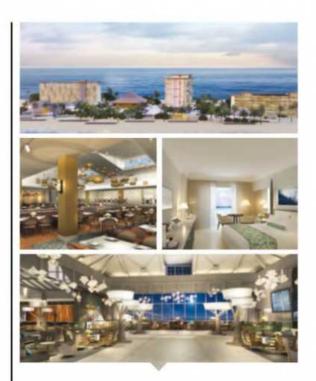
With eight oceanfront resorts overlooking the sparkling Caribbean Sea, Palace Resorts invites you to experience an awe-inclusive vacation where top-notch service, luxurious amenities, and world-class entertainment set the scene for an unforgettable escape.



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Award-winning spas, internationally inspired dining, pictureperfect pools, and gorgeous beachfront settings are all standard amenities at Palace Resorts. And the price tag may be more affordable than you expect: all-inclusive accommodations start at \$172 per person, per night, based on double occupancy.





NEW IN 2015: MOON PALACE JAMAICA GRANDE

Idyllically located on Jamaica's famed Ocho Rios Bay, Moon Palace Jamaica Grande is Palace Resorts' newest property. Boasting 17 oceanfront acres, this lavish new resort has undergone a multi-million dollar enhancement project, resulting in a stunning, all-inclusive resort experience that will take your breath away. Cool off at one of five fabulous swimming pools. Relax at the 35,000-square-foot wellness sanctuary and Awe Spa. Test the surf on the FlowRider Double® wave simulator. And savor world-class cuisine and top-shelf drinks at five dining destinations and six bars and lounges. Families will love the expansive Wired Teen Lounge and unrivaled kid's club dubbed "The Playroom."

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The fashionforward crowd at Hotel Chantelle. LEFT: Seymour's gin-based Rake. BELOW: The Tom Dixon-designed Craft London, with its killer view.

cocktails and cheeky libations like the Jolly Mess, made with rye, cardamom, and dark-chocolate liqueur.

How does an ox-cheek doughnut with a view sound after midnight? Setting the trend for round-the-clock dining when it opened in 2012, Duck & Waffle (duck andwaffle.com) is by far London's most exclusive 24-hour restaurant, 40 floors up in the Heron Tower (at Liverpool Street station). Go for the popular namesake dish, paired with a rhubarb spritz.

New York City's Hotel Chantelle (hotelchantelle.com) has hopped the pond, bringing late-night fun and French and American fare to Marylebone (near Bond Street station). Though the name might suggest otherwise, this is a restaurant and bar; it's open until 2 a.m. for dinner and until 3 a.m. for drinks.

Knock back a scotch cocktail, like the gingery, lemony Penicillin C.

UP TILL DAWN Still have some stamina? Hotels are adapting to the prospect of the new Tube, too. The second Zetter **Townhouse** (thezettertownhouse.com), the sister to the Clerkenwell original, landed this summer in Marylebone (near Marble Arch station). It's a 24-bedroom Georgian town house with zany panache, elegant bathrooms, a private roof terrace, and a cozy parlor, where master mixer Tony Conigliaro makes decadent cocktails-try Le Sphinx, with orange neroli honey, ambrette bitters, and champagne. The bar might close at 1 a.m., but hotel guests can sip Conigliaro's premixed cocktails—they're in the mini-bar. Or skip over to St. Martins Lane, London's original boutique hotel (Embankment station), which recently introduced Blind Spot (morganshotelgroup.com), a glistening cocktail lounge. It's the perfect spot for a nightcap before you stumble upstairs and sleep it off until noon.



TRENDING | JURA WINES

For consumers ever more interested in small-batch products, Jura wines are something of a revelation. The French region near the Swiss border produces wines made from grape varieties and styles that are not often used elsewhere, such as the intentionally oxidized vin jaune, whose flavors can range from nutty to curry-like. The less daring can still appreciate the Jura's pale red wines—earthy and herbaceous, made from Poulsard and Trousseau grapes. Order online (sherry-lehmann.com) or ask the sommelier anywhere with a sizable French wine list, such as **McCrady's** (mccradys restaurant.com), in Charleston, S.C., to school you on the bottles. - CAREY JONES





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THE COCKTAIL GENIUSES ARE AT WORK IN SAN FRANCISCO

132 TRAVEL + LEISURE / DECEMBER 2015

Morgan Schick and his team, the Bon Vivants, helped usher in a new era of the city's nightlife with Trick Dog, the Mission's go-to cocktail bar. We asked him about the group's newest project—and other favorite bars in town.

the Mission's
This vintage

This vintage industrial space hidden inside Union Square's Hotel G opened in March to much acclaim. The cocktail list includes the Swarthy Gentleman, with rye, rum, sherry, coffee, chocolate, and bitters. Schick goes for the dealer's choice and surrenders his fate to the bartender. benjamincoopersf.com.

Café du Nord

In June, the Bon Vivants relaunched the historic hangout in the Swedish American Hall—"an homage to old nightlife," Schick describes it—complete with oyster-shell-infused martinis, live music, and a turn-of-the-century vibe. cafedunord.com.

Benjamin Cooper





A few blocks from Trick Dog (trickdogbar. com), this bar has a chill atmosphere, cult spirits, and inventive food, none of which requires a fork. Try the bite-size grilled octopus or the kimchi fritter. abvsf.com.

Smuggler's Cove

This Civic Center bar is the ultimate spot for a piña colada or a flaming cocktail. A favorite of Schick's bartender buddies, the

watering hole is full of the kitschy tiki finds that owner Martin Cate has been collecting for years. smugglerscovesf.com.

Bar Agricole

This South of Market bar is beloved for its sleek design—wood from reclaimed whiskey barrels, hanging glass sculptures—and novel cocktail menu filled with reimagined Caribbean classics like the dark-rum swizzle and planter's punch. baragricole.com.

Stookey's Club Moderne

Schick likes to get a martini at Stookey's, which opened earlier this year. The Nob Hill space combines 1930s décor— a framed portrait of FDR hangs on the wall—with eco-friendly touches like biodegradable floors made from burlap and linseed oil. stookeysclubmoderne.com.

Specs Twelve Adler Museum Café

The old-school dive bar has been frequented by poets, beatnik holdovers, longshoremen, and misfits since it opened in 1968. Owner Richard "Specs" Simmons, who lives nearby, keeps his North Beach hideaway looking much the same as it did in Ginsberg's day. 12 William Saroyan Place; 415-421-4112.



TRENDING | GOSE BEER

A subcategory of what is known as sour beer-a centuries-old style that also includes Berliner Weisses and Lambicsartisanal Gose is marked by a well-balanced mix of salt, coriander, and wheat, and is actually neither tart nor very sour. "It's a little more complex and wellbalanced than your typical sour beer," says Jimmy Carbone, beer aficionado and proprietor of Jimmy's No. 43 (jimmysno43.com) in New York's East Village. Gose was born in Leipzig, Germany, and had all but disappeared until a few producers brought it back in the 1990s. Craft-beer bars like the Porter Beer Bar (the porterbeerbar.com) in Atlanta, Brü (bruphilly. com) in Philadelphia, and ChurchKey (churchkey dc.com) in Washington, D.C., typically have some bottles stocked. For an authentic taste, look for German imports such as Ritterguts's Gose and Bayerischer Banhof's Leipziger. - CORINA QUINN





 $Originally\ reserved\ for\ members\ of\ the\ Cuervo\ family, Reserva\ de\ la\ Familia^{\scriptsize @}\ is\ an\ Extra\ A\~nejo\ tequila\ aged\ in\ French\ and\ American\ oak\ made\ from\ the\ Estate's\ finest\ hand-selected\ agaves.$

ReservaDeLaFamilia.com/RollingStones



SIP, SAVOR AND TOUR THE WORLD

POUR A ROCK 'N' ROLL LEGEND

The rich history of Cuervo is nearly inseparable from the rock 'n' roll beat of the Rolling Stones and their infamous 1972 North American tour. It all started at a bar in San Francisco called The Trident, where the bartender grabbed some Cuervo and created the Rolling Stones' first tequila sunrise. The band loved the drink so much that it became the official cocktail of the tour—and aboard the Rolling Stones' fabled tour plane, The Lapping Tongue, Cuervo kept the endless party going all tour long. Let the legend inspire your own adventures in great taste with Cuervo around the world.

Savor the magic with Jose Cuervo Reserva de la Familia*, in a limitededition bottle commemorating the Rolling Stones 1972 tour.

ROCK ON AT
RESERVADELAFAMILIA.COM/
ROLLINGSTONES

For years, much of Cape Town's Central **Business District** was fairly quiet after business hours—but no longer. Along Bree and Loop Streets, these clubs keep the CBD humming well past sunset. BY SARAH KHAN

6 Hou

STREE

choose among more

sourced from places ranging from the

American South to

than 150 gin offerings,

South Africa. facebook.

com/mothersruincpt.

scarlet-toned rooftop

introduced Torii, its

lounge downstairs,

4 Tjing Tjing/Torii

In June, popular

bar Tjing Tjing

blue-hued sister

with sumptuous velvet furniture and kicky Pop art murals that draw a sophisticated after-work crowd.

5 House of Machines Part café, part motorcycle shop, part men'swear emporium, the dark space becomes a live-music venue after dark, showcasing popular local acts in a bar packed with revelers. thehouseof machines.com.

6 Coco/GoldBar

One of Cape Town's most vaunted clubs, Coco added another spot next door with the August opening of VIP-heavy GoldBar. Expect to rub elbows with South African luminaries while grooving to a rotating roster of global DJs. cococpt.co.za.

7 Era

The futuristic design here sets the stage for one of the best electronica scenes in South Africa. Spend the night dancing to international DJs in a techno temple with walls and ceilings of flashing LED lights. eracapetown.com.

Lines running along Loop Street have been a common sight ever since the Village Idiot opened in May. If you make it inside, join locals swaying to live music on the balcony and by the pool table, or making the acquaintance of the Village Idiot himself: Oskar. the stuffed ostrich presiding over the bar. thevillageidiot.co.za.

If you're in town: with galleries and boutiques keeping their doors open late. first-thursdays.co.za.

1 Orphanage Cocktail Emporium Vintage glam is

what's on tap at this Victorianesque, speakeasy-style bar: a chandelier strung with old keys, oil lamps, and waistcoated barmen theatrically presenting retro cocktails, like the rum-based Daddy Warbucks. theorphanage.co.za.

2 Door 221

The newest kid on the lively 200 block of

Bree Street opened in late June. Come early to the intimate bar on Taco Tuesdays for some of the best Mexican dishes in Cape Town—paired with Don Julio tequila. facebook. com/door221.

3 Mother's Ruin Gin Bar

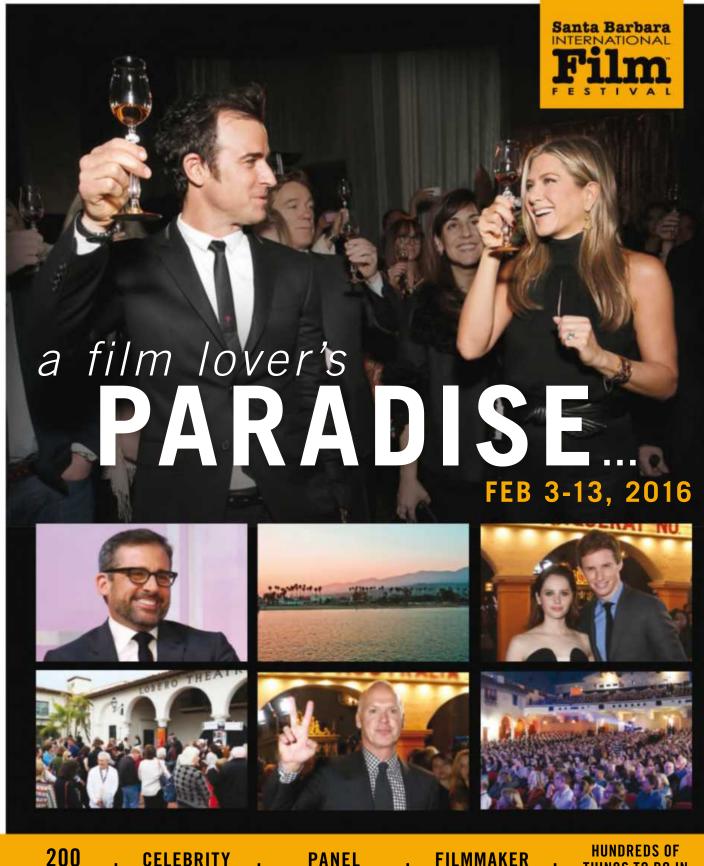
Connoisseurs looking for something new can strike up a conversation with the knowledgeable bartenders. They'll help you



DJs descend upon Era. CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW: The Village Idiot's mascot; amplified conversation in a corner of Era; a Daddy Warbucks at the Orphanage Cocktail Emporium. tjingtjing.co.za.

8 Village Idiot

First Thursdays is one of the city's biggest monthly events, when the CBD transforms into a festive block party,



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FILMMAKER Q&A'S HUNDREDS OF THINGS TO DO IN SANTA BARBARA





HAVANA'S **HOT NIGHTS ARE GETTING** HOTTER

> **Easing regulations** on private businesses is allowing bares clandestinos to come out of the shadows. Translation: a muy caliente nightlife scene in the capital of Cuba.

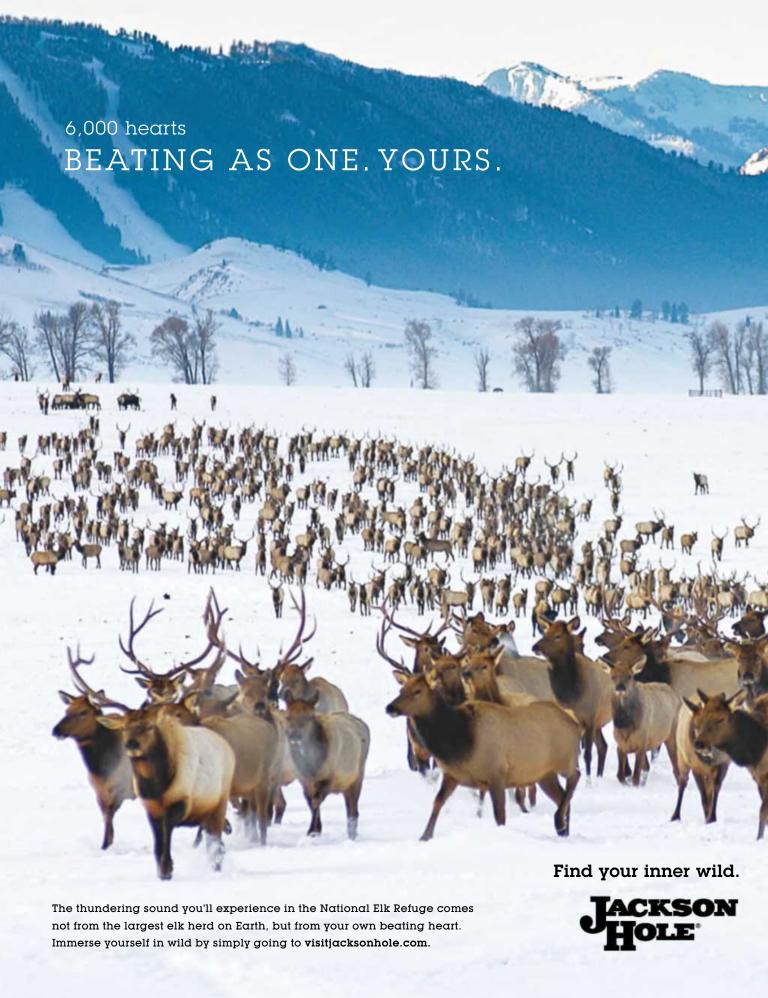
BY CAREY JONES

Whether in times of need or times of plenty, Havana has never lacked for rum, music, and parties fueled by both. But that doesn't necessarily mean the city has always had a vibrant nightlife scene; Cuban bars, like virtually every other Cuban enterprise, have long been under state control. For the past few years, however, the government has been allowing would-be entrepreneurs to open private businesses, and Havana is now seeing an explosion of homegrown bars—dynamic venues that break out of the bureaucratic uniformity. "Cuba has such a long cocktail tradition," says Havana-based tour guide Jesus Noguera. "There have always been bares clandestinos—essentially speakeasies—and now private bars are opening up all over because they are finally legal." Many feel like classed-up house parties, since they're run out of people's homes. >>

TRENDING | RAICILLA

First, high-end tequila captivated the cocktail world; next came smoky, earthy mezcal. The agave drink of the moment? Raicilla, a spirit that, like tequila, is made in the Mexican state of Jalisco. Unlike tequila, however, raicilla can be distilled from many species of agave, and every expression is unique, with flavors that range from vibrantly acidic to Gorgonzola-like funky. The first brand to cross the border is La Venenosa, imported in four styles; each is made from a different species of agave. Order some from Astor Wines & Spirits (astorwines.com).-c.J.









Havana is best seen from a vintage car, so hail a 1950s convertible and cruise the waterfront Malecón to the Miramar neighborhood, where you can walk through the high-ceilinged parlors of the converted mansion Espacios (espacios-habana.com). In the back is a leafy outdoor bar with a louche, garden-party vibe. In nearby Vedado, where the best bars are located, Bar Bohemio (1065 Calle 21; 53-7-833-6918) isn't a bohemian den, but rather a restored villa that's been transformed into an airy, colonial-era lounge with a swank backyard. Order the house cocktail, a frozen blend of vodka and basil.

Gay nightlife, too, has become more visible: friendly, basement-level Humboldt **52** (52 Humboldt; 53-5-295-4893) has young, attractive barmen and the occasional drag show, while the wild dance floor at KingBar (kingbarhavana.com) showcases DJs spinning Latin and American hits.

Elsewhere in Vedado, El Cocinero (Calle 26 between Calles 11 and 13; 53-7-832-2355) is secreted up three flights of stairs in what was once a cooking-oil factory. It's now a sophisticated roof bar with sharp, professional service (not a given in Cuba) and some of the city's best daiquiris. Sip a round before braving the crowd at Fábrica de Arte Cubano (fac.cu; open Thursdays through Sundays), a warren of stages, galleries, and bars-don't be surprised

if you wander into a modern-jazz set, some performance art, and a spacious outdoor terrace, all without setting down your refreshingly dry mojito.

Farther east, the hipster crowd congregates at Siá Kará Café (siakaracafe.com), where Havana's eclectic aesthetic finds expression in the irreverent art juxtaposed with quirky vintage details. Even La Guarida (laguarida.com), the city's mostpublicized paladar, or in-home restaurant, has recently opened a new rooftop bar. It serves refined cocktails crafted by internationally recognized British and American mixologists.



TRENDING I **NEW INFUSIONS**

From California to Cuzco. Peru, ingenious bartenders are altering the flavor profiles of classic cocktails, infusing spirits with unusual ingredients, creating some deliciously avant-garde results. At L.A.'s speakeasy-style Walker Inn (thewalkerinnla.com). you might find beetsteeped vermouth or a strawberry-infused cognac-and-mezcal blend, both made in a centrifuge. At the new Broken Shaker (broken shaker.com) in Chicago. indulge your inner tween with the Cocoa Puff Old-Fashioned, which uses bourbon infused with the chocolaty cereal as its base. Portland keeps it weird at Kachka (kachkapdx.com), where the menu includes whiskey flavored with caraway in the Jewish Rve. The trend isn't limited to the States: In Cuzco, the pisco sour served at the **Qespi Bar** (iwmarriott.com) is made with your choice of pisco steeped with purple corn or coca leaves.-L.I.







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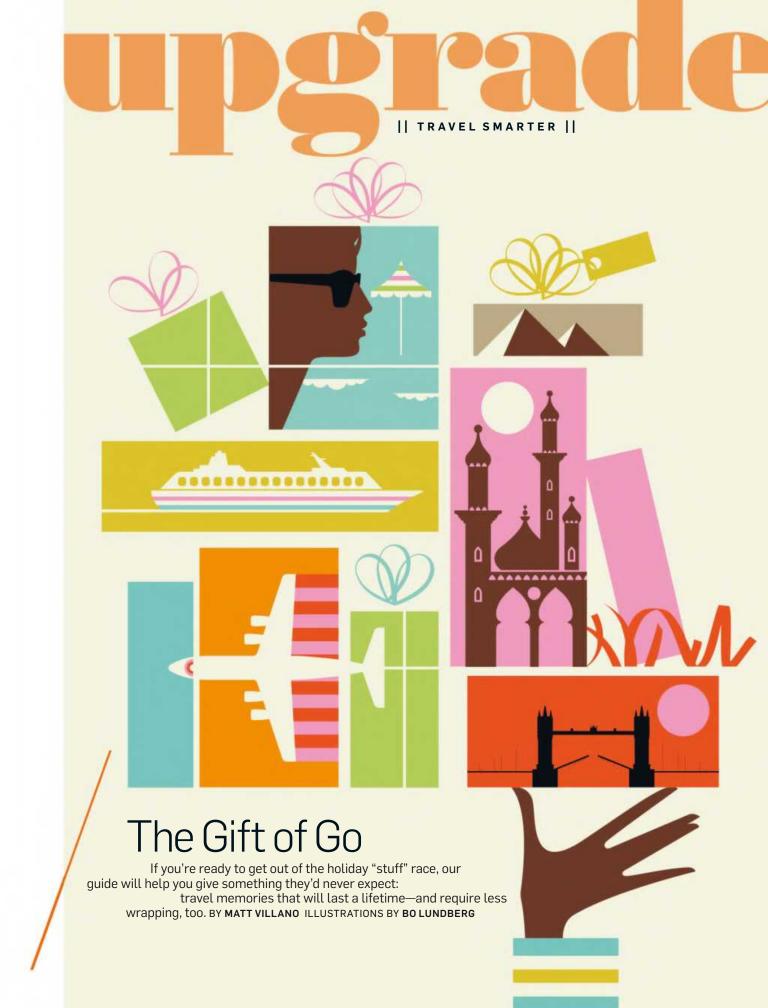
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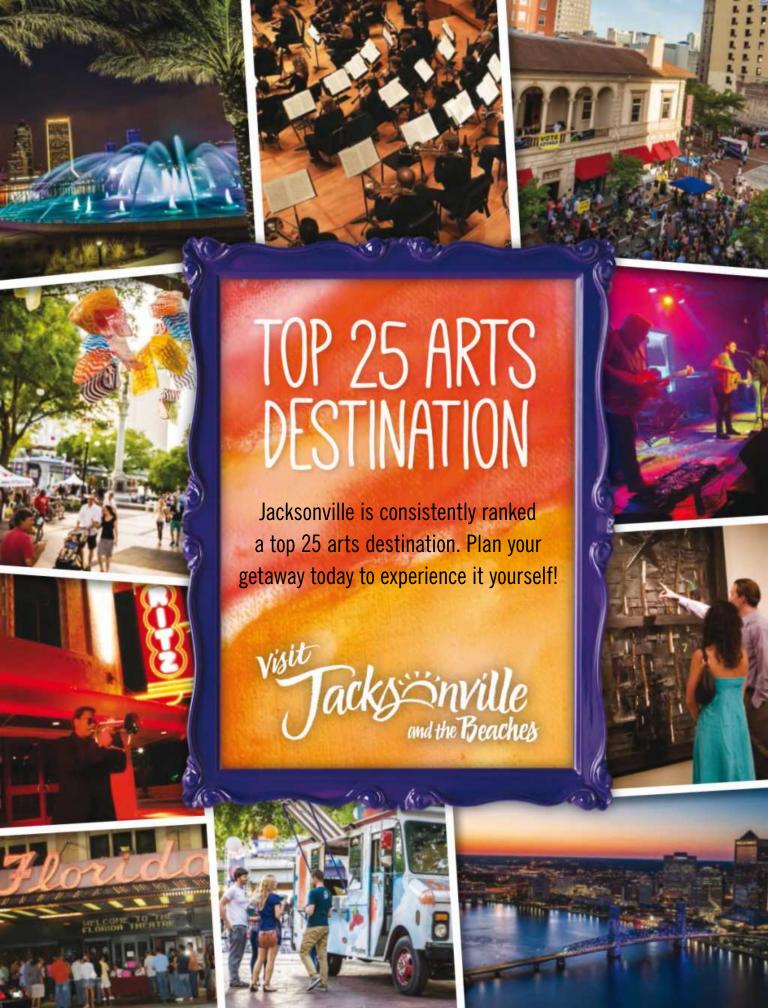












PLANES, TRAINS, AND FERRARIS

A PRIVATE-JET JOURNEY.

ALL-YOU-CAN-FLY TRAVFI

If someone on your West Coast list is constantly on the go, newcomers **Surf Air** (surfair.com) and **OneGo** (onego.com) offer unlimited flights for a flat fee. With Surf Air, you're traveling on private jets; at press time the company covered Los Angeles. San Francisco, Santa Barbara, Carlsbad, and Truckee, California, plus Las Vegas. Prices start at \$1,750 a month. OneGo subscribers get access to commercial flights in Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, and Arizona for as little as \$1,500 a month.

AIRLINE GIFT CARDS

Just about all of the major carriers offer gift cards; you can get them directly from the airlines and in many supermarkets and bigbox stores. (E-delivery is also an option—with United Airlines, it's the only option.) Be aware that gift cards usually

can't be used toward upgrades or baggage and other fees—so they're better suited to larger amounts. (Denominations vary: Southwest cards come in any amount up to \$1.000. for instance.) And some companies limit the number of cards you can redeem at once.

PRIVATE JETS

A more indulgent gift: an airplane all to themselves. The Marquis Jet

and other fees, and there are restrictions on peak days.

GROUND TRANSPORT

Trains and car services also have gift options. Amtrak (amtrak.com) sells \$50 to \$1,000 gift certificates (for a \$5 fee). A caveat: they can only be redeemed at a ticket counter.

Even Uber (uber. com) has gift codes that let recipients book a car in any of the 60 countries it serves. And

On the West Coast, newcomers Surf Air and OneGo offer unlimited flights for a flat fee.

Card unlocks access to the NetJets (netjets. com) fleet, which ranges from short-hop Cessnas to Bombardier Global 6000s capable of zipping from Boston to Cape Town. The cards come in 25-hour increments, starting at \$150,000. That doesn't include fuel surcharges at the opposite end of the spectrum, Gotham **Dream Cars** (gotham dreamcars.com), with locations in New York, Miami, and Los Angeles, lets you give top-shelf rentals, which start at \$349 a day. A Ferrari or a Lamborghini is a mighty nice way to get away for a weekend.

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH

things. Things can nourish us, keep us warm or cool, connect us with our loved ones, make us look good—or, at the very least, better.

But experiences make us happier than material goods do, according to a Cornell University study published last year. That's just one among many similar findings that indicate that doing stuff, rather than having stuff, brings the most lasting joy.

So this holiday season, instead of buying someone a gadget, consider giving a getaway. Rather than choosing a scarf, spring for an escape. Travel yields memories that last forever, and enables your friends and family to grow through new sights, tastes, smells, and encounters. Plus. they won't have to find space to store it.

Where to begin? We've gathered up some ideas to inspire you—plus some tips to help you get it right.

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GIVE YOUR FAVORITE PEOPLE A PLACE TO BED DOWN—WITH ACCOMMODATIONS THAT RANGE FROM PUP TENT TO PALACE.

BIG BRANDS

Gift cards from companies that own a whole host of brands are a win for people who travel often to major and more obscure destinations. Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, which operates more than 130 properties under the Fairmont, Raffles, and Swissôtel names, lets recipients use gift cards for everything from rooms to spa treatments. Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts has a similar policy: you can use the credit toward any charge that can be applied to a hotel bill right down to the tips. Some companies do put limits on gift cards: Marriott International, which owns a range of brands, from Ritz-

Carlton to Fairfield Inn. doesn't allow them to be put toward prepaid reservations.

CURATED COLLECTIONS

Hotel associations and collections gather properties with similar styles; giving a gift from one is a subtle way of showing that you understand someone's travel taste. Relais & Châteaux (relaischateaux.com), the worldwide consortium of restaurants and inns selected for their charm, sense of place, service, and cuisine, approaches gift certificates in a refined fashion. In addition to choosing straight dollar denominations, givers can select packages such as a three-course

dinner with wine or champagne (\$425 for two) or a wellness escape that includes a spa treatment (\$668 for two). The recipient just has to pick a property.

The Mr. & Mrs. Smith collection (smithhotels.com) in-

treatments or meals. Bedandbreakfast. com sells no-fee, nonexpiring gift cards in any amount you choose that are welcomed at most of the nearly 6,000 B&Bs and inns the booking site represents in the U.S. and Canada.

tree houses and yurtsin the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy. This holiday season, a £150 purchase comes with a £50 bonus voucher. Rural Retreats (rural retreats.co.uk) is a group of more than

Instead of choosing a straight dollar denomination, givers can select packages such as a three-course dinner with wine and champagne.

cludes roughly 1,000 design-forward boutique hotels. Bookings made through the Mr. & Mrs. Smith website come with a free extra, such as a picnic lunch or a welcome cocktail. A downside: gift cards cannot be used for spa

OFFBEAT ACCOMMODATIONS

Perhaps your giftee prefers less-traditional digs? Gift cards from Canopy & Stars (canopyandstars.co.uk) can be used toward stays at more than 550 glamping spots—think

350 luxury rentals in the U.K., mostly in the countryside. The company offers gift youchers starting at £25. Home-rental behemoth Airbnb provides electronic credits that make for easy, if somewhat unromantic, delivery.

GIVING THE

Airline and hotel points can be a more powerful gift than cash-if you and your recipients handle them wisely.

1. Don't transfer.

Giving someone your surplus miles might sound smart, but you'll probably get hit with transfer fees. With most programs, you can simply book travel for others through your account. And **TetBlue** and British Airways let you pool miles in household accounts for free.

2. Consider the fees.

Airlines usually add sales tax and processing fees to mileage purchases. When they use the miles, recipients may also have to pay redemption charges, which can range from just a few dollars to more than \$1,000, depending on the airline and class of seat.

3. Do the math.

If you're buying points, don't spend more than you would if you paid for a flight or room in cash. Compare the total cost of the miles you want to purchase to the retail price of whatever they'll probably be used for, to make sure you're getting-and givinga deal.

4. Look for specials.

Most loyalty programs offer bonuses or discounts on mileage purchases or transfers at some point during the year. If you can, hold off for a really good one-they're especially common before the holidays. (This is when it pays to be on the e-mail list.)

- BRIAN KELLY

/upgrade/

ALL-INCLUSIVE ADVENTURES

IF YOU'D LIKE TO WRAP UP SOMETHING BIGGER AND MORE COMPLICATED, TURN TO A SPECIALIST.

DAY TRIPS

For bucket-list quick-hits, Viator (viator.com) specializes in short tours and activities—a day trip in California wine country for about \$75, a helicopter tour of New York for less than \$200, and thousands of other options. It sells gift cards in amounts of up to \$500.

you're booking, any of them can be purchased as a gift.

GOOD SPORTS

There are plenty of ways to satisfy those who dream of attending an athletic event. Los Angeles-based travel agency **Trine** (trine.la), which specializes in major happenings, can

either customize one of the deals on the website or order à la carte over the phone. Prices average \$3,000 per person.

AMBITIOUS ADVENTURES

Want to give an impressive present but avoid getting involved in the planning process? Choose a trip-or a voucher—from a highend tour operator. Gift certificates from Cox & Kings (coxandkingsusa. com), which organizes group and private journeys, come in \$250 to \$25,000 denominations. They can be used for the company's custom or preplanned trips and



are even transferable. Our own **T+L Journeys** (tandl.me/journeys) are meticulously mappedout vacations to destinations across the globe, created in partnership with bespoke travel company Black

Tomato. All of the itineraries can be purchased as gifts for someone else. A fournight Nashville trip, for example, focusing on the area's food and music scenes starts at \$3,390 per person.

Choose a day trip in California wine country, a helicopter tour of New York, or one of thousands of other options.

FAMILY FUN

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arrange a trip to see the Ryder Cup in Scotland, for instance, with a suite near the golf course, up-close viewing privileges, and cart transport around the greens. Costs depend on the kind of trip you have in mind. Fandeavor.com, founded three years ago by a pair of Zappos alums, provides all-inclusive custom trips to major games, and is expert at putting together gift packages. You can

EASY EXTRAS

Stocking stuffers that can make travel safer, faster, and more pleasant.

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Trunkster The product of a Kickstarter campaign that raised \$1.4 million against a \$50,000 goal, Trunkster combines features such as GPS tracking and an onboard scale with an ingenious sliding front access panel, which eliminates the need for zippers. trunkster.co; from \$445.

Andiamo IQ In addition to a removable USB charger and an antitheft alert that goes off if the bag gets too far away from you, the IQ includes a Wi-Fi hot spot that can be activated with a local SIM card. The IO is also one of the best-looking of the new contenders. andiamoluggage.com; from \$599



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TRAVEL LEISURE









AROUND 8:30, A WARM RAIN BEGAN TO FALL on Honolulu's monthly night

market, but no one seemed to mind. Not the crowds swarming the food vendors up and down Cooke Street, not the bikinied models strutting the runway for the local boutique Bamboo Sky, not the multitude of leashed, smiling dogs—and not me. I was fresh off the plane, sitting on a curb devouring a bowl of noodles and lemongrass tofu. The scene was pleasantly cacophonous, with grumbling generators, shouted food orders, and the competing beats of several DJs. Teenagers leaned against streetlamps and ate gourmet mac and cheese with chopsticks. Couples strolled while sipping lemonade from huge Mason jars adorned with stickers that said Aloha.

A piece of conventional travel advice passed among mainlanders goes like this: Hawaii is wonderful, but avoid Honolulu. It's just a city.

No, no, no.

True, Honolulu is a real city, one with rushhour traffic and a thorny homelessness problem and some unfortunate 1960s architecture, but there's no place like it. The emerald Koolau Range rises up at its back, mounded with fluffy clouds; the turquoise sea sprawls at its feet. Rainbows appear without fanfare, linger, dissolve. Coconut palms abound, as do magnificently domed monkeypod trees, white-blossomed frangipanis, royal poincianas with flame-red flower crowns-all of it rustling in the trade winds. Even Honolulu's white concrete towers, gridded with balconies, have a certain tropical charm. Here, almost halfway to Asia, is an American urban center, distinctly exotic but distinctly familiar, too, down to the revitalization happening in some of its once-gritty precincts.

Consider Kakaako, the neighborhood that hosts the night market. Just southeast of downtown, it has a light-industrial history and a cinder-block aesthetic now softened by colorful murals and a new abundance of inviting shops and restaurants. Sleek condominiums are going up, along with lively mixed-use complexes. Within one block, one might visit Paiko, an airy florist meets coffee shop; the cozy cocktail nook Bevy; the taqueria Cocina; and Hank's Haute Dogs, purveyor of elevated wieners. And that's before you settle in at the open-air, wood-andsteel taproom of Honolulu Beerworks. "Kakaako has a great feel to it with all the small businesses in the area," said Geoff Seideman, founder of Beerworks. "We wanted to build a community gathering place."

I heard several Oahu residents describe Kakaako as Honolulu's answer to New York's Williamsburg, usually with a hipster-disavowing roll of the eyes but also with unmistakable pride. Honolulu isn't kitschy, they were telling me. It's neither a provincial backwater nor a theme park for tourists. Honolulu is its own place. Honolulu is cool.

Chinatown has lately become the embodiment of this. "It still has an edge," Mark Pei, cofounder of the creepy-fun curiosity shop and gallery Hound & Quail, told me. "There's a lot of history here." The streets were quiet on the Monday evening I visited, almost deserted. Pei was right about the history. The flat, frontiersy facades of some of the buildings hint at the brothels and opium dens of the past, and the now-extinguished neon sign for 1950s girlie joint Club Hubba Hubba conjured the ghosts of carousing sailors. Other structures are exuberant architectural mishmashes: Italianate, Art Deco, pagoda. I passed shuttered produce wholesalers, tattoo shops, a window advertising Chinese herbs, another displaying crystals and feng shui items. Brick, an unusual building material for Honolulu, is everywhere in Chinatown, preferred by developers after earlier incarnations of the neighborhood were largely destroyed by fires in 1886 and 1900. The bricks themselves arrived on ships from the mainland and were swapped out to make room for cargoes of sugarcane.

At the intersection of Smith and Hotel Streets stand two of the city's most talked-about restaurants, Lucky Belly and Livestock Tavern. Both are co-owned by Dusty Grable and Jesse Cruz, and both feature exposed brick and unfussy but elegant cuisine. (Sitting at the polished Livestock bar in the last of the evening light, I ate delicious







pasta with sea urchin in a golden, creamy sauce.) No stranger to reinvention, Chinatown has in the past century gone from thriving immigrant enclave to seedy red-light district to punkish no-man's-land to, it seems, gastronomic frontier. "The charm, the grit, the character, the culture," Grable said about why he chose Chinatown. His vision for the area, like Seideman's for Kakaako, is inclusive and collaborative. "What we love most," he said, "is the sense of community in working toward making it a destination neighborhood, not just individual venues."

Indeed, the immediate vicinity of the Grable-Cruz mini-empire practically demands a post-dinner bar crawl (with a de facto theme of exposed-brick interiors). Manifest, on Hotel Street, has a large chalkboard devoted solely to whiskey options. Bar 35 across the way dazzles with its panoply of craft beers. Hank's Café around the corner has a divey vibe and a cozy second-floor jazz venue called the Dragon Upstairs.

Emerging into the warm night after my last stop, I paused, getting my bearings, a little spooked by the contrast between the lively indoors and the empty street. Old-fashioned streetlamps cast down pools of yellow light. A couple of raggedy street kids jumped on and off a bench, laughing raucously. Suddenly one of them loomed in my face, pale, with dilated pupils. "Do you know where you're going?" he asked.

"Yes," I said, though I did not, quite. Purposefully, among the ghosts of sugarcane cutters and rowdy sailors, I walked on. I am glad to have been here before this place turns into something else.

"AVOID WAIKIKI" IS ANOTHER piece of advice you'll

hear, but I have a soft spot for it. Sure, Honolulu's most famous beach is chockablock with hotels and bristling with selfie sticks, but everybody seems to be having such a good time. And what a beach it is: a long crescent of white sand lorded over by the reclining bulk of Diamond Head, ruffled by rolling waves long and low enough to beckon even the most novice surfer. Catamarans and outrigger canoes steer out through the swell. Sightseeing helicopters buzz overhead, sweeping by the iconic panorama.

After lying by the pool at the Halekulani hotel on Waikiki Beach, drinking a mai tai garnished with a purple orchid—the very fantasy of Oahu—I meandered down Kalakaua Avenue, Waikiki's main shopping drag, at dusk. Masses of people in bright alohawear drifted in and out of boutiques and malls like fish in a glossy reef, buying up goods that have chugged here on container ships and will soar away in the baggage holds of airliners. Louis Vuitton. Apple. Quiksilver and Billabong. The ubiquitous ABC convenience stores peddled sunscreen and cheap souvenirs. I passed the statue of surfing pioneer Duke Kahanamoku, his bronze arms draped with fresh leis. Beyond, the sky had gone tangerine over silver water, and the disappearance of the sun behind the long, flat horizon reminded me just how much ocean was surrounding us, here on this volcanic blip in the world's most geographically far-flung island chain, on our little raft of commerce.

I ended up at Yoshitsune, a hotel-lobby hole-in-the-wall across the street from the beach. Grandmotherly servers with limited English but immaculate kimonos clacked around in wooden sandals, serving sashimi, house-made tofu, sticky gobs of fermented soybeans, steamed egg custards in ceramic pots. Everyone else was Japanese, and I felt briefly disoriented, as though I had stumbled through a portal to a neighborhood joint in Tokyo.

The next morning, a mere two miles away, I felt as though I were in Damascus-specifically in the 18th century. I was on the Honolulu Museum of Art's tour of Shangri La, a house built by Doris Duke in the late 1930s just east of Diamond Head and filled, over the course of 50 years, with a world-class collection of Islamic art. There are Persian tiles from the 1200s; a Mughal-style bedroom inspired by the Taj Mahal; a dining room designed to resemble an imperial tent; a luminous ceramic mihrab, or prayer niche, for which Duke outbid the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Damascus Room was one of the last stops: a dim, close chamber of antique painted panels. Through the dark lattice screens that cage the windows, only the glimpses of electric-blue waves and wispy clouds gave away that I was in Hawaii.

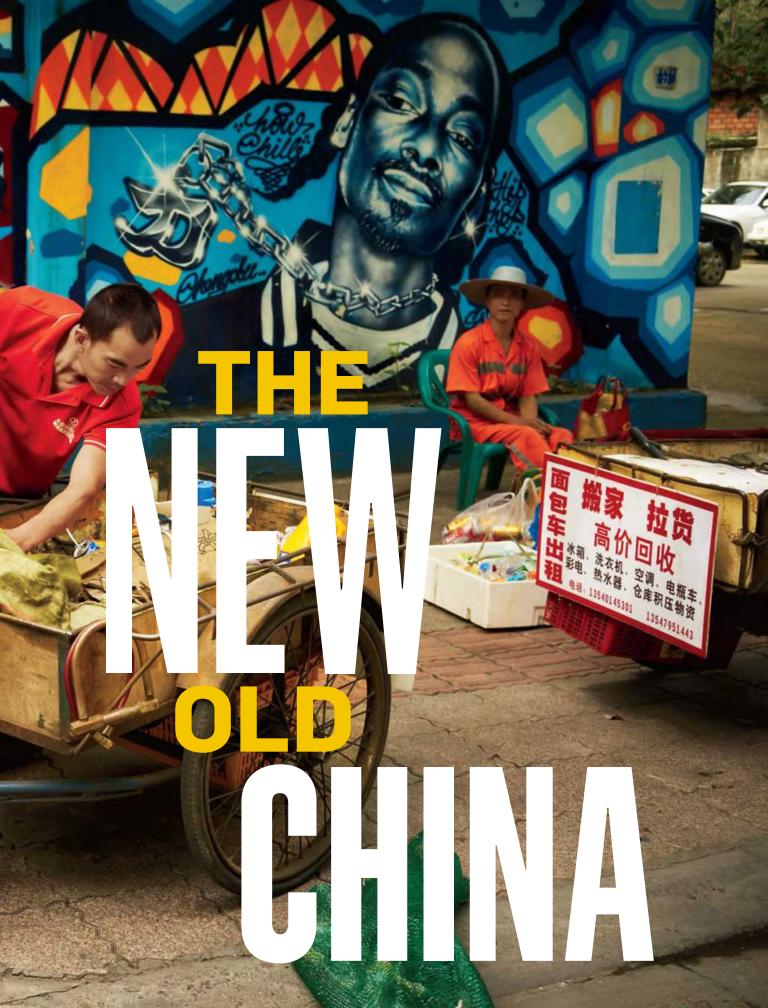
Oahu has this effect, of seeming like many places and eras at once. Sometimes you are in Middle America and sometimes you are in

(Continued on page 187)

THE DETAILS Where to stay and eat, and what to do, page 184







"THIS IS THE REAL CHINA,"

said the American photographer, sipping whiskey on the patio of the Niccolo, a new luxury hotel in downtown Chengdu. "This is it, man, this is where it's really at." We were schmoozing around the hotel bar at an event sponsored by the American Chamber of Commerce, surrounded most immediately by an assortment of meat-and-cheese plates, and beyond that by the skyscrapers of Chengdu's commercial center. "I don't think it is," said a British hotelier, as politely as possible. "Not the real China." He nodded down at the shops below us. "Not here with Tiffany and Cartier and whatever that one is." The photographer, seeing his challenger's point, hedged. "Well if you go out of town twenty miles, you'll find it there," he said.

It wasn't the first time I'd heard an expat waxing on about realness or the lack thereof in China. For many foreigners, there's a geographical hierarchy of authenticity. Shanghai is at the silicone-fake end of the spectrum. (Hong Kong doesn't even register.) Beijing is slightly better, with its end-of-days traffic, shoddy English, and general chaotic whirl. Chongqing, Wuhan, Changsha: legit. Get down to your third-tier cities like Zhuhai, Shijiazhuang, or Taiyuan, and you may have some hope of experiencing real, lung-blackening, gut-lacerating, Imodium-proof China. If you want something really real—possibly too real—go to the countryside.

Chengdu falls somewhere in the middle of the spectrum. It's not quite a Tier 1 city—maybe 1.5, with a population of 14 million—but it has grown rapidly in recent years, and now has many of the markings of a cosmopolitan Chinese metropolis, including multiple ring roads, colossal malls with international brand-name stores, and pollution you can taste. Yet it has also somehow managed to remain distinct: slow where Shanghai is fast, green where Beijing is gray, provincial where Guangzhou is internationalized. As the capital of Sichuan province, it's beloved by foodies, and traditional arts like Shu brocade and Sichuan opera survive, albeit largely for tourists. It has a sense of place—there is a *there* there—that may be what the photographer was referring to when he called it "the real China."

Authenticity is a slippery concept anywhere: it's always hard to put your finger on what's real or fake, or what those words mean in the first place. China makes it especially difficult, with its fondness for knockoff phones, handbags, eggs, news, Apple Stores, diplomas, and quaint European villages. As a tourist, you're constantly asking yourself: Is this real?

The question was on my mind as I strolled through the Wide and Narrow Lanes, a traditional-looking shopping area in downtown Chengdu. It felt like walking onto the set of a movie about the late Qing dynasty, with excellent catering. I passed low-slung buildings with high thresholds and imposing archways guarded by stone dragons. Food stalls lined the walkways, selling famous

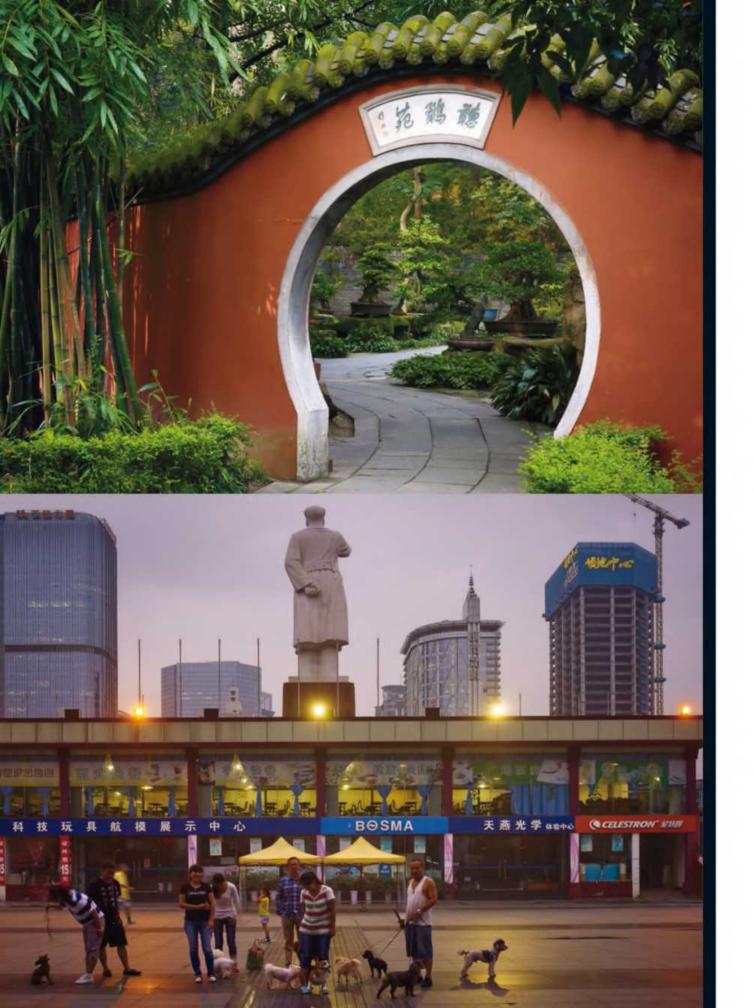
Chengdu snacks like dandan noodles and balls of glutinous rice paste called sandapao, or "three cannonballs." Here, I thought, here was the real Chengdu. The spell was broken, however, when I stumbled upon a magnificent three-story teahouse-style building with characters hanging above the gray brick entryway: 星巴克咖啡. STARBUCKS COFFEE.

"It's all counterfeit—it's fake," said Zhang Xianjin, a retired professor of architecture, when I met him at a nearby teahouse (a real one, located in an open-air courtyard house built over a hundred years ago). "It has no historical value." Zhang wore a plain white shirt with a mandarin collar and spoke with guickness and precision. The Wide and Narrow Lanes were a typical example of fanggu, he said, a term that literally means "imitating the old," but has become synonymous with the fakery of historical buildings. Throughout the country, fanggu has been China's answer to its own destructive past. With few actual relics or old buildings left to preserve, the government has instead chosen to rebuild them as they might have looked in their prime.

Architects I spoke with, both Chinese and Western, dismissed the fanggu style as tasteless, inauthentic, "Disney-like." And yet it's become the prevailing aesthetic of Chinese heritage sites, including Beijing's Front Gate area, south of Tiananmen Square; the Xintiandi shopping area in Shanghai; and entire sections of the Great Wall. Even though the Wide and Narrow Lanes look old, 85 percent of the buildings there are newly built, Zhang said—including, surprise, the Starbucks. "It's neither donkey nor horse," he said dismissively.

Zhang, born in Chengdu in 1943, had witnessed the city's selfdestruction firsthand. In 1967, when he was still an architecture student,

OPPOSITE, FROM TOP: Wuhou Temple, established in the third century; a statue of Chairman Mao stands on the site of the former imperial palace in Tianfu Square.





the local government decided to demolish the imperial palace in the city center and erect a statue of Chairman Mao. It was the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, a motto of which was, "Destroy the old world and build a new world." Zhang, now 72, said, "At that time, I was crazy, too. My brain wasn't normal.... It was a bad period of history." Later, after the political climate quieted down, he began to study China's ancient architecture. He visited the Forbidden City in Beijing and the gardens of Suzhou. Only then did he realize that knocking down the imperial palace had been a tragic mistake.

In terms of historical preservation, the worst was yet to come. Like most Chinese cities, Chengdu transformed completely after the country opened up its economy in 1979. Traditionally known for its slow pace of life, tree-lined streets, and penchant for mahjongg, the city has shot up and out, leveling old neighborhoods to build skyscrapers, constructing a series of ring roads and two subway lines (with seven more to come), and creating a new hightech industrial development zone in the south, which now features the building with the world's largest floor space, the New Century Global Center. (One Chengdu resident spoke for many when he called it "the world's biggest mistake.")

After 2008, when a magnitude 7.9 earthquake struck the mountainous area northwest of the city, Chengdu sought to rebrand itself as a destination for both tourists and investors. Companies including GE, IBM, and Dell opened offices here, and Apple began producing iPads in a factory nearby. United Airlines launched direct flights from San Francisco, and the city became a hub of the "New Silk Road" freight line connecting China and Europe.

These developments were good for Chengdu's economy, but not necessarily for its soul. The city razed traditional structures and erected behemoths in their place. "I actually think modernization has been more damaging than the Cultural Revolution was," Zhang said. But he said it's not too late



to preserve some of Chengdu's essence. "It's late, but it's still possible," he said. The question is how.

WHEN PEOPLE TALK ABOUT CHENGDU,

the word that comes up most is relaxed. (Well, that and pandas—we'll get to them.) I heard many explanations for the city's purported tendency toward leisure, from its geography (it's surrounded by mountains, so residents never had to worry about invaders) to its soil ("Put a stick in the ground and it will grow flowers," goes one saying) to its temperature (hot and humid). This relaxation takes many forms: playing the aforementioned mah-jongg, exercising in the park, eating the local hot pot known for its numbing spiciness, or, in the case of a visiting Beijinger like me, strolling

around and inhaling deeply whenever I passed a tree, which was often. (Perhaps the most remarkable thing about walking around Chengdu is that one *can* walk around Chengdu.) At the same time, its residents are spenders, especially when it comes to high-end shopping. According to a 2013 report, 85 percent of top international brands have opened stores in Chengdu, making it one of the country's largest markets for luxury goods.

It was with this local character in mind that Lin Hao and his team of architects first started designing the new Sino-Ocean Tai Koo Li Chengdu shopping area that surrounds the Daci Temple, one of the city's oldest Buddhist temples, located in the city's skyscraper-studded downtown.

Residents of the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding. OPPOSITE: The Daci Temple, now part of the Sino-Ocean Tai Koo Li shopping complex.

"Our approach was to understand the lifestyle of Chengdu rather than the heritage itself," Lin Hao said. "We had to look at the so-called 'software' side of conservation." Walking around the complex, colloquially known as Tai Koo Li, on a Thursday afternoon, the place felt as much like a park as a mall. A child holding a balloon pranced in front of a fountain that sprang out of the paving stones. In the massive Fangsuo Commune bookstore, a group of girls crowded around *The Book of*

(Continued on page 190)

THE DETAILS Hotels, museums, and how to see pandas, page 185



The Things They I Carry

This holiday season, give the travelers on your list gifts they can take around the world, whether to a ski chalet, a desert hideaway, or the perfect castaway beach.

BY JANE BISHOP | PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOANNA MCCLURE | STYLED BY JILL NICHOLLS























I WAS STANDING ON THE TENTH FLOOR OF THE FORMER



The Eye Film Institute. OPPOSITE, FROM TOP: Fresh tomato with sheep's-milk cheese being prepared by the chef at Vuurtoren-eiland; the coworking space at Volkshotel.

Shell Tower in Amsterdam-Noord with Sander Groet, a boyish-looking 46-year-old dressed in a faded T-shirt and jeans, a construction helmet placed jauntily on his head. The view overlooked all of Amsterdam; below, the IJ River flowed past, sun glinting off the surface of the water in the late summer light. The legendary canals and historic architecture, with its red gabled roofs and steeples piercing the sky, looked quaint in miniature. "I was born about twenty kilometers outside the city and I could see the tower from my window and think, 'There is Amsterdam,'" Groet said. Now, he is part of a team of four entrepreneurs responsible for transforming this iconic 22-story building—which was once home to

Royal Dutch Shell but was abandoned in 2009 after the financial crisis—into a cultural attraction for the whole city: a 24-hour music-themed hub with an affordable boutique hotel, a rotating restaurant, offices, and a subterranean nightclub. By the spring of next year, it will be rechristened as the A'dam Tower.

Amsterdam-Noord—roughly a third the size of Amsterdam, and just 300 yards and a five-minute ferry ride from the central train station—was once, somewhat unbelievably, not really considered part of the city. Originally home to docklands and industrial sites, the area began to suffer after the shipping industry gradually deserted the neighborhood in the mid eighties, leaving it to rot and rust, like the set of a dystopian thriller. A decade ago, its gritty landscape and raw architecture resembled today's central Detroit.

What makes the appeal of Noord different from the outskirts of other cities is the relatively small size of Amsterdam itself. Its historic center—the 17th-century canal ring, a UNESCO World Heritage site—is about half the size of New York's Central Park. That means its fringes, and the quirky experimental restaurants and projects happening within these districts, are far more accessible for travelers, even those based in the city center, especially if you get around by bicycle, as all the locals do.

Which explains why I was facing south on a hard-hat tour with Groet. For visionaries like him, Amsterdam proper—with its coffee shops, tulip stalls, and legendary redlight district—has become too crowded, overrun by tourists and the wealthy. And just like New York's SoHo or the Marais in Paris, the city's main thoroughfares more closely resemble luxury shopping malls than unique neighborhoods. In the past few years, major streets have become so packed that, in the high season, they are impossible to penetrate. The line for the Anne Frank House often wraps around two or sometimes three blocks. Against the picturesque backdrop of Prinsengracht, with houseboats bobbing in the water, there is a palpable sense of bike rage.

Many of Amsterdam's tastemakers have made a new life for themselves working on the city's edges, moving not only to Noord—though that's by far the most notable shift—but to Oost (the East), too. Pushed out from the center, these new hotels, studios, shops, restaurants, and cafés have helped the city maintain a sense of individuality that was becoming harder and harder to see. Brimming with eccentric creativity and artistic spirit, they also offer an optimistic glimpse of the city's future.

BEFORE THERE WAS A'DAM, THERE WAS EYE,

a jaw-dropping feat of design by Austrian architectural firm Delugan Meissl. The building, a white, UFO-like structure on the river's edge, appears to hover over the water as if it has just descended from outer space. The Eye Film Institute's presence in Amsterdam-Noord was a major tipping point for the neighborhood—the museum chose to relocate from its original headquarters in Vondelpark, opening this new space in 2012. It was a smart move. Imagine if the Whitney had chosen to build its new Renzo Piano-designed museum in Red Hook, Brooklyn instead of downtown Manhattan. Almost all day, every day, Eye's café is packed with both locals and visitors who have come to enjoy the views from what has now been dubbed Nieuw Amsterdam.

Among the other pioneers is the restaurateur Niels Wouters. One Tuesday evening, I followed him into the dining room of his nearly 10-year-old restaurant, Hotel de Goudfazant. It was buzzing with a lively crowd. When he first opened it, in an old hangar about a quarter the size of a football field on the waterfront, he told me, he had no idea how fast Amsterdam-Noord would develop. He just loved the big space, and the rent was next to nothing—plus, he relished the challenge of being off the grid. Almost everything inside the building was repurposed: piles of old bricks were made into a low partition in the open kitchen and a yellow vinyl floor was ripped out, sawed into tiles, and used to create a mosaic on one of the walls. The dramatic centerpiece in the space, a massive Carlo Scarpa glass chandelier, was the only object of market value, and even that was borrowed from a friend, a gallery owner who couldn't



find a room big enough to hang it in. "We had no money but we find it good fun to do things really, really cheap," Wouters said. "Even if we had money we'd still do everything ourselves."

In 2012, Wouters opened another restaurant, smaller but more ambitious, called Café Modern. The menu is a Dutch spin on French bistro fare, offering unfussy dishes like oysters with cucumber and cockles with croutons. The restaurant is set in an old bank building with a mirrored back wall, recycled industrial lights, and an open kitchen. It's just a five-minute bike ride from Eye and around the corner from



Van der Pekstraat, a small avenue lined with shops and three-story brick housing projects, currently being gentrified with indie bookstores and boutiques. "It's changing now," said Wouters, "but it's happening slowly and organically. Of course, I'm part of that change, but I hope it remains a mixed neighborhood."

Bicycle beyond the waterfront and Amsterdam-Noord gets weirder and harder to navigate. Go left or right off Van der Pekstraat and you'll pass former harbor captain's houses, parks, canal locks, shiny new office buildings, and shoddy little warehouses and garages. Many artists and designers have taken advantage of the affordable rent, colonizing these industrial buildings—though it can be difficult to tell what's an old storage building and what's a studio.

One day, I followed Lilian Tilmans, the happy-go-lucky 57-year-old founder of Amsterdam Personalized, who occasionally (Continued on page 188)

THE DETAILS Hotels, restaurants, and more, page 185

Farhat, owner of Maxwell Café. ABOVE: Small bites served aboard Yveer XIII, a 1927 ferryboat. OPPOSITE. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Lonneke Gordijn at Studio Drift; Bak restaurant; the outdoor setup at Vuurtoreneiland.



the Details/

Our guide to this month's featured destinations, including the best places to eat, sleep, and explore.



(Brooklyn's Next Frontier **p. 69**)

The Brooklyn Bed-Stuy's first boutique hotel features 34 rooms with modern design details and L'Occitane amenities. thebrooklyn ny.com; doubles from \$139.

RESTAURANTS & BARS

Bera'n From the founders of Brooklyn Flea and Smorgasburg, a Crown Heights beer and food hall serving shawarma and chili dogs. bergn.com.

Emily A husband-and-wife-run pizzeria where the couple's chemistry is as much a feature as the pies. pizzalovesemily.com; entrées \$9-\$21.

Food Sermon Delicious Caribbean dishes served from a build-yourown-bowl menu. the foodsermon. com; entrées \$8-\$14.

L'Antagoniste A Brooklyn take on

classic French dishes like canard à l'orange, Provençal rack of lamb, and frog's legs. lantagoniste.com; entrées \$18-\$38.

Little Zelda A charming neighborhood coffee spot selling some of Brooklyn's favorite snacks. little zelda com

Lovers Rock Live DJs and tropical drinks made with coconut ice cubes give this new bar a Caribbean party vibe. loversrock nvc.com.

Mayfield Bistro fare for brunch, lunch, and dinner—the sandwiches, from the burger to the po'boy, are the standouts. mayfieldbk. com; entrées \$18-\$25.

Mekelburg's Next-level deli sandwiches like Wagyu roast beef and the B.L.A.S.T. (bacon, lettuce, avocado, soft-shell crab, and tomato). mekelburgs.com; sandwiches \$13-\$15

Peaches Southern classics with a contemporary spin, like shrimp and grits cooked with white wine

group.com; entrées \$16-\$21. Saraghina A menu of pizzas served in a homey, happy setting brings a touch of Italian authenticity to Bed-Stuy. saraghina

and mushrooms. bcrestaurant

brooklyn.com; pizzas \$12-\$18. Saraghina Bakery Offers a range of artisanal loaves made in-house. saraghinabakery.com. Scratchbread Chewy sourdoughs, wheats, and other baked goods, served alone or as the base for sandwiches. scratch

bread.com: sandwiches \$5-\$9.

Park Delicatessen Possibly the only place in Brooklyn where you can buy a bouquet of freshcut flowers while customizing your skateboard. parkdelibk.com. Sincerely, Tommy Avant-garde

fashion meets community in a sleek, inviting storefront curated by one of the neighborhood's own. sincerelytommy.com.

CÁDIZ. SPAIN

(From Trash to Treasure **p. 90**)

GETTING THERE

The most convenient airport is in Jerez, easily reachable via a connection in Madrid.

Parador Hotel Atlántico de Cádiz A contemporary hotel offering spectacular views of the bay at every turn. parador.es; doubles from \$112.

RESTAURANTS

Aponiente Chef Ángel León's newest venture is redefining how less-popular seafood is used in cuisine. El Puerto de Santa María: aponiente.com: tastina menus from \$179.

El Faro de El Puerto

A romantic spot serving authentic Andalusian cuisine. El Puerto de Santa María: elfarodelpuerto. com: entrées \$20-\$61.

Andalusian horse show Step back in time with this equestrian ballet, featuring 18th-centurystyle costumes and classic Spanish music. Jerez de la . Frontera: realescuela.ora.

Doñana National Park This UNESCO World Heritage site is home to five threatened bird species and serves as a stopover for various flocks traveling from Europe to Africa for the winter. magrama.gob.es.

Sherry tastings Visit the bodegas of the world's sherry dynasties, including Pedro Domecq and González Byass. bodegasfundadorpedrodomecq. com; gonzalezbyass.com.





OAHU, HAWAII

(Pacific Heights p. 156)

Halekulani A sleek Waikiki oasis that fronts a small nook of beach. halekulani.com; doubles from \$525

Turtle Bay Resort Recently renovated to the tune of \$45 million, this busy resort has everything from horses to helicopters. turtlebayresort.com; doubles from \$280.

RESTAURANTS & BARS

Bar 35 A beer hot spot in

Honolulu's Chinatown with more than 200 ales, porters, and lagers from 20 different countries. bar35hawaii.com; pizzas \$13-\$17.50.

Cocina A taqueria led by chef James Walls incorporating local produce and meat. Kakaako: cocinahawaii.com: entrées

Hank's Haute Dogs Popular haunt offering creative takes on an American favorite. Kakaako: hankshautedogs.com; hot dogs

Honolulu Beerworks Choose from the list of local brews at

OAHU, HAWAII

this breezy open-air taproom in Kakaako. *honolulu beerworks.com.*

Lei Lei's Casual place along a golf course at the Turtle Bay Resort that draws a mixed crowd of travelers. turtlebayresort.com; entrées \$24-\$37.

Livestock Tavern At the vanguard of Chinatown's rebirth, this restaurant serves a seasonal menu of stick-to-your-ribs cuisine in a rustic, inviting space. *livestocktavern.com*; entrées \$16–\$32.

Lucky Belly A trendy ramen shop, complete with a late-night takeout window. *Chinatown; luckybelly.com;* ramen \$9-\$14.

Manifest Mixing cocktails that keep aficionados returning, this bar has a chalkboard dedicated specifically to whiskey. Chinatown; manifest hawaii.com.

Paiko Florist and coffee shop offering hands-on floral workshops and locally sourced plants. *Kakaako*; paikohawaii.com.

Sharks Cove Grill A permanently parked food truck peddling hearty surfers' smoothies, sandwiches, and grilled skewers. Haleiwa; sharkscovegrill.com; entrées \$4.50–\$13.

Yoshitsune A little piece of Japan tucked into the Park Shore hotel that has delicious omakase dinners as well as an array of à la carte options. Waikiki; parkshore waikiki.com; entrées \$9–\$48.

ACTIVITIES

Honolulu Night Market

The third Saturday of every month, food vendors and local merchants set up shop on Cooke Street in Kakaako. honolulunight market com

North Shore Surf Girls

A predominantly female team of instructors provides group and private surf and paddleboard lessons on the North Shore. northshore surfgirls.com.



CHENGDU

(The New Old China p. 164)

TRAVEL ADVISORY

All U.S. citizens are required to obtain a visa before arriving in China. Have your itinerary ready and allow one month for processing.

HOTELS

Niccolo One of the city's newest luxury hotels has a lovely outdoor bar overlooking downtown Chengdu. marcopolohotels.com; doubles from \$186.

Temple House Encompassing the historic Bitieshi courtyard, the new Swire property in the Jinjiang

district captures the spirit of the city. thetemplehousehotel.com; doubles from \$266.

RESTAURANTS

Huang Cheng Ba Snacks Right by the Wuhou Temple, it's known for *dandan* and *tian shui* noodles and mouthwatering *hong you* dumplings. *259 Wuhouci Da Jie*; *86-28-8507-6117*; *entrées* \$1–\$3.

Old Pier (Lao Ma Tou) Hot Pot This popular hot-pot joint has

a massive, ornate façade to match its illustrious reputation. 27 Yulin Zhong Lu; 86-28-8555-5705; hot pot for one from \$15.

Zhuan Zhuan Mo Excellent

Sichuan food in the city's walkable Yulin neighborhood. Try the fried rabbit. 1-7 Ke Yuan Jie; 86-28-6151-2236; entrées \$1-\$14.

ACTIVITIES

Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding Learn how scientists have kept China's mascot from going extinct. panda.org.cn.

Du Fu's Thatched CottageWhether or not beloved Tang
dynasty poet/drunkard Du Fu
actually lived here, the scenic
forest is certainly beautiful enough
to inspire verse. 28 Caotang Lu;
86-28-8731-9258

Jianchuan Museum Cluster
One of the most remarkable
museum complexes in the country
is in Anren, about an hour's drive
from Chengdu. It displays artifacts
from the Cultural Revolution,
World War II, and the 2008 Sichuan
earthquake. *ic-museum.cn.*

AMSTERDAM

(The Leading Edge $\mathbf{p.178}$)

HOTELS

Hotel de Hallen Kick back in the spacious rooms in this renovated 1902 tram depot. *hoteldehallen.* com; doubles from \$168.

Morgan & Mees A chic, nineroom inn tucked above a buzzing restaurant and bar. morganand mees.com; doubles from \$168.

Volkshotel Housed in the former offices of the *Volkskrant* daily newspaper, this hip bolt-hole has a nightclub and views of the city from the rooftop terrace. *volkshotel.nl; doubles from \$66.*

RESTAURANTS & BARS

Bak This former pop-up now has a permanent home serving monthly fixed menus with dishes like eggplant with cherries and foraged wildflowers. bakrestaurant.nl; prix fixe \$50.

Café de Ceuvel A mixed-use space popular for its fresh salads sourced from an on-site garden and pizza from a wood-burning oven. cafede ceuvel.nl: entrées \$8-\$17.

Café Modern A small, Frenchinspired kitchen with an affordable but ambitious fixed menu. *modern amsterdam.nl*; *prix fixe from \$45*. Foodhallen This modern food market offers everything from decadent burgers at the Butcher to éclairs at Petit Gâteau. foodhallen.nl.

Hotel de Goudfazant A pioneering bistro in a massive, stylishly reinvented hangar on the water in Amsterdam-Noord. hotelde goudfazant.nl; entrées \$21.

Maxwell Café An all-day coffeehouse perfect for an espresso or a glass of wine. *maxwellcafe.nl*; entrées \$16–\$21.

Vuurtoreneiland A wildly popular culinary adventure that comes with its own boat ride to a protected island on the IJmeer. *vuurtoren eiland.nl; prix fixe \$62.*

Waterkant An inventive restaurant on the Singelgracht inspired by the city's Surinamese population. waterkantamsterdam.nl; entrées \$11–\$17.

ACTIVITIES

Arcam This architecture foundation publishes several excellent walking and biking maps of lesser-known and developing neighborhoods. *arcam.nl.*

Eye Film Institute It's worth the five-minute ferry ride to this film museum and architectural icon for the excellent exhibitions and film screenings. *eyefilm.nl.*

Tropenmuseum Programming at



this ethnographic institution examines issues faced by developing nations, LGBT communities, and more. *tropenmuseum.nl*.

TRAVEL GUIDE

Lilian Tilmans creates custom Amsterdam adventures and can organize face-to-face meetings with some of the city's innovators and designers. amsterdam personalized.com.

Stories in this issue were produced with assistance from andBeyond Benguerra Island and Mandapa, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve.

An article about Istanbul on page 96 of the October 2015 issue listed a website for the Grand Bazaar that was incorrect. The correct website is grandbazaaristanbul.org.



the Details,

BUYER'S GUIDE



MOOD BOARD

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Madeline Weinrib (madelineweinrib.com); Hermès (hermes.com; 800-441-4488); **Dior** (dior.com); Altuzarra top, \$995 (Neiman Marcus stores): skirt, \$1,995 (net-aporter.com); sandal, price upon request (altuzarra.com); Forest of Chintz (runway2 street.com); Aerin (aerin.com); Amarie (shoplatitude.com); HM Balanguera Beach

Balanguera Beach Hotel, doubles from \$179 (hmbalanguera beach.com).

GIFT GUIDE

p. 170-171 Jimmy Choo x

Moonboot (select Jimmy Choo stores; jimmychoo.com); Bomber Ski

(bomberski.com); Hibiki Japanese Harmony (whisky. suntory.com); Target

Threshold (target. com); Magnea for Club Monaco

(Club Monaco stores; clubmonaco.com);

Brunello Cucinelli (Brunello Cucinelli

SoHo, 136 Greene St., N.Y.C.; 212-334-1010).

p. 172

Jil Sander (jilsander. com); Clarks (clarks usa.com); Irene Neuwirth (8458 Melrose Place, West Hollywood, Calif.; 323-285-2000); Polaroid (polaroid. com); Hermès (hermes.com: 800-

441-4488); Nalgene

(llbean.com).

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Tomas Maier (tomas maier.com); Gianvito Rossi (Gianvito Rossi stores); Prada (prada. com); Marni (net-a-porter.com); Clé de Peau Beauté (clede peaubeaute.com); Eric Buterbaugh Florals (ebflorals. com); Eugenia Kim (shopbop.com).

p. 174-175 Kule (kule.com); Ultimate Ears (ultimateears.com); Parke & Ronen (parkeandronen.com; 176 Ninth Ave., N.Y.C; 212-989-4245); **DaFiN** (dafin.com);

Loewe (Barneys New York stores; barneys. com); Clarins (clarins usa.com); Acne Studios (acnestudios. com); Ancient Greek Sandals x Peter Pilotto (saksfifth avenue.com); Michael Kors (michaelkors. com; call 866-709-5677 for locations).

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RH (RH.com); Burberry (burberry. com); Cartier (cartier. us; 800-227-8437); Barebones (llbean. com); Louis Vuitton

(louisvuitton.com).

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Roger Vivier (Roger Vivier, 750 Madison Ave., N.Y.C.):

Buccellati (buccellati. com); Pomellato Collection (pomellato. com; 800-254-6020); Gucci (gucci.com);

Baccarat (baccarat. com; 800-777-1800); Dior (dior.com).



(Oahu, continued from page 162)

Asia. Sometimes you are in a gleaming, pan-ethnic Pacific Rim future and sometimes in a retro resort paradise invented by 1960s travel agents. The island's fiery prehistory looms in the form of the Koolau and Waianae mountain ranges, eroded remnants of shield volcanoes inactive for millions of years. At Pearl Harbor, the USS Arizona, sunk in 1941, still bleeds oil. A complex native culture and heritage underlies all of it, ancient but alive. The island has absorbed and hybridized the influences of visitors since the first Polynesian seafarers arrived more than 700 years ago, so why should it stop now?

I DROVE EAST over the Koolaus and followed the Kamehameha Highway north along the coast. I passed clapboard churches, schools with jalousie windows open to catch the breeze, homemade signs advertising fresh lychees and pickled mango, the sheltered waters of Kaneohe Bay. KEEP THE COUNTRY COUNTRY! exhorted a banner strung along a fence. Old-timers sat on their lanais, watching the breakers roll in.

Once I rounded Kahuku Point, I was officially on the North Shore, surf spot of legend, where every winter big waves kicked up by Aleutian storms make the long trip south to pound Sunset Beach, Banzai Pipeline, Waimea Bay, the whole coast. An annual migration of elite riders follows. High-level surfing is a paradoxical pursuit, its practitioners characterized by a chilled-out countercultural vibe but also by a consuming obsession, and the North Shore, even in summer, has a correspondingly mixed mood, both mellow and relentlessly single-minded.

"Big-wave surfing is what put the North Shore on the map, and there isn't a more famous collection of surf

breaks anywhere in the world," said Jodi Wilmott, a 16-year North Shore resident and general manager for the World Surf League. "The ocean is central to the Hawaiian lifestyle, and surfing is a major expression of that." Surfing draws thousands of people (and their money) to Oahu every year, from big-name pros to clueless spectators like myself, and it also brings Hawaii to the world. Even the most dedicated and distant landlubbers can find themselves unexpectedly beguiled by surf films, surf fashions, surf slang. The North Shore is, as locals say, country, but it's also an international port of call; it's a peaceful place, and it's a near-mythical place of pilgrimage.

Shrimp trucks and fruit stands dot the roadsides. Surfers—dudes and chicks, kids and graybeards—walk the shoulder with boards under their arms, occasionally sticking out a thumb for a ride. In the town of Haleiwa, tourists buy frozen açai bowls from thatched-roof stands, peruse surf shops, sign up for surf lessons. Locals hang out and talk about waves, about real estate, about trips off-island.

"That you can be as visible or as invisible as you choose" was how Wilmott described what she loves about life on the North Shore. "That you can be truly adventurous—hike, climb, dive, surf uncrowded spots—so close to home; that it attracts very creative, artistic, eclectic types; that you are half an hour from the city and an international airport while being a thousand miles from care."

The recently renovated Turtle Bay Resort certainly felt like that. It is the only big hotel on the North Shore and is a resort-y resort, with lots to do: horses and helicopters, golf and tennis, snorkeling and surfing, restaurants of varying degrees of formality—the kind of place where you could imagine a Dirty Dancing-style romance flourishing. The hostess at my beach cottage greeted me with a lei and a hug, and after a dinner of fish with coconut sauce at Lei Lei's, a low-key restaurant beside a golf course, I slept with only a screen door between me and Turtle Bay itself, lulled by the sound of crashing surf.

On my way to Sunset Beach in the morning, I grabbed oatmeal and a

coffee from the Sharks Cove Grill food truck and then sat in the sand and watched the surfers. Even with the relatively gentle summer swell, Sunset is a serious spot, but the wet-suited figures shooting through aquamarine barrels looked relaxed, at home in the waves. I envied their skills, their boldness. Though I am a SoCal native, I never learned to surf, and so (When in Rome! she thought dorkily) I scheduled a two-hour lesson with North Shore Surf Girls, a local outfit founded nine years ago by women's surfing pioneer Carol Philips.

The next morning I bobbed in the beginner-friendly waves at Chun's Reef while Kat McGill, my 23-year-old instructor, hung on to the back of my board and radiated good cheer. "Okay, we're going to get you a wave," she called. "Ready?"

"Sure," I said, less than sure.

"Paddle, paddle, paddle!" She kicked with her fins and gave me a helpful shove onto a breaking wave. Dutifully, I paddled, then pushed up from the board with my arms so I was speeding along while doing a sort of cobra pose on a steep slope of white water. "You got this!" Kat yelled from behind, ever the optimist. "Stand up!"

As I had practiced on the beach, I attempted a sort of ninja hop onto my feet, landing with knees bent, one arm forward, the other crooked at my waist. For a moment, I didn't fall. Under my board, a shallow, rocky reef sped by. Underneath that—slowly, slowly—the Pacific Plate pulled the island away from the lava-spewing hot spot that formed it. Behind me, open water stretched more than 2,000 miles to Alaska. Ahead was the beach, the parking lot full of jeeps and rental cars, the road. Beyond the road unfurled Oahu with its palm trees and waterfalls and pleated volcanic mountains, its jungled canyons and the red-clay soil of the Dole pineapple plantations, its bungalows and beach mansions and hotels and military bases, the white towers of Waikiki, then more ocean, only ocean.

In another second, I fell, of course, flat on my back into the water, but for all the different ways to see Oahu, all its myriad angles, I was pleased to have glimpsed it, however briefly, from a surfboard.



(Amsterdam, continued from page 182)

leads custom tours of the city that focus on Amsterdam's young designers and innovators. She took me to meet Ralph Nauta of the design duo Studio Drift. A tall and handsome 37-year-old with a head of dark, unruly hair, Nauta explained that he and his partner, Lonneke Gordijn, aspire to create objects that combine their passion for nature with futuristic technology. "I am obsessed with Star Trek and science fiction," said Nauta, "and Lonneke is more organic and interested in pure nature." I was drawn to their delicate but space-age-like light fixtures constructed from bronze sculptural shapes and electrical circuits, with harvested dandelion seeds that have been carefully glued on. Another of their designs, called Shylight, is a chandelier made out of layers of silk fabric that resembles a floating jellyfish; it was recently installed in the Rijksmuseum.

Nauta told me that what really drives him to design is his desire to solve some of the world's big problems. He is unapologetic about his childlike idealism. "What I have learned is that everything is possible," he said. "If I go to a producer and they can't do what I want them to do, I know I'm on the right track. I find the research process essential. It's what sparks other ideas." He is currently working with a chemist to extract materials from chemical waste with zero emissions. Out of the leftovers they have invented a kind of synthetic obsidian, deep black like hardened lava. He pointed to a black, reflective oval sculpture that they call their Obsidian Mirror. "We want to create beautiful objects that are about solving big issues."

Environmental sustainability and alternative practices of urban development are also what inspire the architect Wouter Valkenier of Studio

Valkenier. I met him at De Ceuvel, a café and multiuse hangout space hidden away in the middle of a group of small industrial garages by a once-polluted canal. It was there that I saw for the first time rescued houseboats, freshly painted in shades of gray and white, raised on platforms and connected by a winding boardwalk that was semi-obscured by clusters of plants—wild grasses, flowering weeds, and young poplars (all soilcleaning, naturally). Peering through a large window of one, I spied a bearded blond man laughing convivially with two women, the glow of Apple desktop computers illuminating their faces. It was the grooviest office ever. Almost all of the most interesting projects here are designed to make something new and utopian from the old.

"The city is starting to understand how important these underground, bottom-up types of projects are," Valkenier told me. We were sitting inside De Ceuvel drinking homemade lemonade and eating salads made from ingredients sourced from the kitchen's own gardens. Valkenier was currently working on a major project in Sloterdijk, in the northwestern corner of the city, near the harbor. According to him, that area will be the next Wild West for the creative crowd.

Until then, another focal point of the city's energy is Amsterdam-Oost. The district includes Dapperbuurt (home to the popular Dappermarkt, an outdoor market selling cheap and exotic items from underwear to spices) and Indische Buurt, a neighborhood that was built at the turn of the 19th century to house working-class families. Many of the streets—Javastraat, Sumatrastraat, Borneostraat—are named after former Dutch colonies. Now much of the area is populated by young students and families who hail from Turkey, Morocco, and Suriname. They hang out at Maxwell Café, an all-day coffeehouse kind of place in the Oosterpark neighborhood.

It's thanks to the café's owner, a young restaurateur of Moroccan descent named Riad Farhat, that the area has generated so much buzz. A feisty sommelier named Mees List who lives nearby told me it's almost impossible to walk into a local bar that

isn't owned by Farhat and his two partners, who have adopted the collective moniker Three Wise Men from the East.

The trio's most dramatic project is located on the backside of a large parking garage on the Singelgracht. Not long ago it was a dark, unwelcoming corner where drug addicts shot up. Farhat reinvented it as a bar and restaurant called Waterkant that has outdoor seating, an indoor café with cheerfully clashing Caribbean colors, and a menu that celebrates Surinamese cuisine. He told me they sell thousands of bottles of Parbo, a popular Surinamese beer, a day.

NOTHING IS FARTHER FROM THE

center than Vuurtoreneiland, a lonely little windswept isle about an hour from the canal ring. Officially part of Amsterdam-Noord, this ship-size fragment of land feels like a remote, floating wilderness. Now it serves as a dramatic stage for one of the city's most talked-about restaurants, which is named after the island. "We sell out almost all our tables for the entire summer in a day," said Brian Boswijk, a cofounder with the chef Sander Overeinder, Boswijk has been involved in some of Amsterdam's most celebrated alternative restaurants, from the roving supper club Interdit to the pop-up restaurant 11.

On a perfect June day, I waited to be picked up by Yveer XIII, the 1927 wood ferryboat the restaurant uses to transport diners to and from the island. It was a delightful voyage. I could see a field of grass dotted with sheep. A pair of falcons drifted over the lighthouse. Upon disembarking, the dinner guests were led along a path to an open-sided structure, angular and Nordic-looking, made of wood and glass. This was where we were to dine. Five nights a week, when the weather is good, Overeinder delivers a fourcourse menu; ingredients for some of the dishes are foraged or grown on the island, then prepared over an open fire. That night, Boswijk told me that he never expected such immediate success with this culinary venture but has an inkling as to why Vuurtoreneiland is so popular: "It's not just a meal but a small journey. You feel the wind and hear the birds."

ONBOARD >

Travel + Leisure Events Promotions Offers





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(Chengdu, continued from page 169)

Answers, asking it questions and then opening it to a random page. (Q: "Will I get back together with my boyfriend?" A: "Don't bet on it.") Admiring a piece of art in the plaza outside the temple, I almost forgot I was flanked by gleaming Gucci and Muji stores.

The architects had to think about hardware, too: How to preserve the six "heritage buildings" on site, all from the early 20th century, while also producing a modern commercial space that integrates itself with its surroundings. Their solution was to develop a mix of old and new styles, letting the location and design of the traditional buildings influence the new constructions around them. They kept the original layout—the "fabric of the lanes," as Hao put it-but added modern touches like public art and pools of water. The new buildings are designed like traditional Sichuan structures, with dark tiled roofs sloping at an angle of 27 degrees, but are clearly recent, rising two to three stories high and incorporating modern building materials and lighting.

In one of the more striking instances of historical integration, the Temple House, a new hotel that occupies the southeast corner of the development, has housed its lobby in one of the heritage structures, an old courtyard called the Bitieshi, which was a government translation office during the Qing dynasty. The Temple House wasn't designed to replicate Chengdu architecture, so much as to capture its spirit. The gray bricks of the courtyard walls protrude irregularly, evoking the pattern seen on the heritage buildings. The grassy hillocks in its lawn area, an homage to the rolling mountains of Yellow Dragon Park, turn out to be skylights in an underground ballroom. During my stay in one of its suites, I found myself wondering if the softness of the towels was meant to simulate the coat of a baby panda.

Adaptive reuse may be a familiar concept in the United States and Europe, but China has relatively few examples, especially ones involving preindustrial architecture. Chengdu does have a former kinescope factory that has been converted into an artand-music space called Eastern Suburb Memory park, as well as an old alley called Chongdeli that has become an elegant café, restaurant, and hotel, though neither is as ambitious as the Daci Temple project. Katy Ghahremani of Make Architects, which designed the Temple House, argued that repurposing old buildings keeps them alive. "The way to preserve heritage buildings is not to treat them as museum pieces, but to actually bring them back into use," she said. And unlike Chengdu's fanggu commercial strips, such as the Wide and Narrow Lanes and the Jinli Ancient Street shopping area, Tai Koo Li's approach makes clear what's new and what's old. "We want it to have integrity and authenticity,"she said.

But the more Ghahremani and I talked, the less clear it became where to draw the line between good preservation and bad preservation, between authenticity and fakery. We all agree it's important to maintain the Daci Temple, but the temple is itself a 20thcentury construction, mostly rebuilt in the style of the Oing dynasty—in other words, fanggu. "Everything you see on site is something reconstructed from history," Hao said. Any quest to preserve Chengdu's essence, it seemed, would inevitably bump up against the possibility that there is no pure Chengdu-ness to be preserved in the first place.

And even if there were, not everyone agrees that conservation is necessary. One day I met up with Chen Zhipeng, a.k.a. Gas, one half of the Chengdu graffiti artist duo Gas & Seve, who incorporate traditional symbols into their murals, which include a giant blue-and-orange goat's head staring down from a wall in the Wide and Narrow Lanes. (This is, after all, the Year of the Sheep.) I found Gas inside the New Century "World's Biggest Mistake" Global Center, where he was doing a commissioned work for a bar, again using his trademark blue and

orange—opposites on the color wheel, hence a play on yin and yang. I asked what he thinks of the city's attempts to preserve itself. "If a building gets to the point where it can't stand up and is falling apart, then it's been demolished by time," he said. "If we insist on restoring it to its original form, that's denying it the dignity of death." He rejected the idea that the Tai Koo Li complex is keeping tradition alive by mixing old and new. "Everything passes," he said. "If you bring it back for the sake of doing business, then you're not respecting its soul."

CHENGDU IS KNOWN FOR BEING RICH IN

history. But when I asked most locals which historical sites I should visit, they rattled off a predictable list: the popular Wuhou Temple, founded in the year 221 and now dedicated to the great strategist of the Three Kingdoms period, Zhu Ge Liang; Du Fu's Thatched Cottage, the lush, forested estate where the great poet/drunkard/ patriot may or may not have once lived; the Dujiangyan irrigation system, built in the third century B.C., which helped turn Chengdu into a fertile paradise and is now a unesco World Heritage site. In other words, the places that reinforce the selective, crowd-pleasing story Chengdu tells itself about its own history, one in which poverty or political upheaval do not feature.

But not everything fits into the official narrative. And in Chengdu, far from the nation's capital, you can get away with telling stories you couldn't repeat closer to the seat of power. On a Tuesday morning, two Chinese friends and I drove to a small town called Anren, an hour outside the city, to visit the Jianchuan Museum Cluster—a collection of galleries, more than 30 in total, spread across 82 acres. After buying tickets at the front entrance, we hopped into a stretch golf cart, and a chipper tour guide drove us to the first museum on our list: an exhibition of memorabilia from the Cultural Revolution.

In four years living in China, I hadn't seen anything like it. (The exhibit on 20th-century Chinese history at the National Museum in Beijing skips over the 1960s and 70s almost entirely.) One gallery features mannequins posed in scenes from that

period, including a peasant family reading Little Red Books over dinner and a calligrapher painting a propaganda poster. Another room collects day-to-day items, including tickets for food, soap, and matches. Later, we saw photos of "counterrevolutionaries" being paraded through the streets on trucks, heads hung in shame, placards dangling from their necks.

Fan Jianchuan, the museum's founder, said he doesn't approach history with an agenda. "We do our best not to take a personal stance," he said. "We let the objects speak." I met Fan at his office at the museum, which has walls covered with his own calligraphy. Despite having made billions in real estate and other enterprises—he was ranked among China's 500 richest people in 2007 and 2008—Fan prides himself on his simple lifestyle. "I buy cheap cigarettes, I wear old clothes, I eat with my employees," he told me.

Fan designed the sensitive exhibits to read like Rorschach tests: Those with fond feelings for the country's revolutionary past will find their nostalgia confirmed. Those who see it as a dark period will find plenty of supporting evidence. Fan, who served in the army and once taught classes in Marxism, knows how to handle these subjects with delicacy. "We should take history as a mirror, to make sure the tragedy doesn't ever happen again," he said. "This is about putting reality on display, and letting the audience, especially young people, decide."

Aside from a desire to avoid future mistakes, Fan said he has personal reasons for preserving the past. "I'm almost sixty years old. As long as the museum is around, I won't die," Fan said. "If it exists, I exist."

I HAD BEEN PUTTING OFF THE PANDAS.

But in Chengdu, the pandas find you. After getting off the plane, I

counted about 90 seconds before I saw a picture of a "bear cat," as pandas are known in Chinese, on a poster for the 16th annual International Furniture Fair. A family of rainbow-colored panda statues sat in a circle outside the Raffles City mall; a giant panda sculpture clambered up the side of the International Finance Square building. It was therefore less by choice than by gravitational pull—possibly even local law-that I woke up at dawn and hauled myself into a van, along with a handful of fellow hotel guests, to visit the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding on the outskirts of Chengdu.

I am not a panda fan. When a BBC presenter went on a diatribe against the panda in 2009, calling it an "evolutionary cul-de-sac," I nodded along. The pandas I had seen at zoos only confirmed my suspicion that they symbolized not humanity's devotion to wildlife, but our unslakable thirst for cuteness. The ubiquity of panda memorabilia in Chengdu—you can buy anything short of a panda itself—only deepened my panda fatigue.

The first panda we saw, Long Bang, did not alleviate my skepticism. We found him passed out on a platform of bamboo scaffolding. ("His character is calm and quiet," according to Long Bang's biographical placard.) This was typical of pandas, I learned: they eat bamboo constantly, but only absorb about 20 percent of its nutrients, so they spend the rest of their time "conserving energy." We watched Long Bang for a minute, hoping he wasn't dead. Suddenly he stirred, then, slowly, turned over onto his other side. The crowd squealed. It was his biggest accomplishment of the day so far.

In the distance, a young Beijing man from our group spotted a panda that appeared to be moving. "This one's alive!" he said, and we rushed

over to see. Qiu Bang was not only alive, he was living well. We found him ripping into a stalk of bamboo, a pile of discarded husks strewn across his belly like some gluttonous Roman emperor. His munching was drowned out by the sounds of coos and digital shutters clicking. He flopped onto his back and kept eating in a supine position—an innovation in laziness I had to admire. He finally sat up again, and the crowd cheered. I was surprised to find my voice among them.

We filed into a movie theater, where we watched a documentary in which Chinese scientists explain, over an Enya soundtrack, how they go about perpetuating the species. For pandas, the greatest threat is not predators, or a lack of food, or a depleted habitat, but their own inertia. Most of the time, they can't even be bothered to procreate. Added to this, mother pandas often "lack mothering skill," the narrator said, over footage of a mother smacking her pink, squiggling newborn around the cell like a hockey puck.

The mere fact of the pandas' continued existence was thus framed as a triumph of human preservationism. But to what end? The Beijinger in our group posited a theory that it's about PR for China, and it would probably be bad publicity for the government to grant the pandas their death wish just now. A cynic might also point to money and diplomacy (China lends pandas to zoos around the world). The insistence on perpetuating the species reminded me of what Gas had said about old buildings: to keep them alive artificially denies them the dignity of death.

Then again, maybe we preserve some things because we just like them. Pandas are cute. Old temples are beautiful. From this perspective, even the act of building a new replica of an old teahouse or meeting hall or the Great Wall doesn't seem so offensive. (Remember, this is a country that keeps its former leader embalmed in a public square.) If it helps people learn what life was like in the past, what's the problem? So it's Disney. People like Disney. And given a choice between life and extinction, between memory and forgetting, who can blame us for choosing the first? •

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its marble-carving studios. While there, the designer—who will open her first L.A. boutique this spring—picked up this postcard of Il Guerriero, a sculpture facing the town hall, and pasted in a portrait of herself on the beach.

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